

Soil and Water Gazette

Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District

Fall 2018

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

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)**, including the following subaccounts National On-Farm Initiative, National Organic Initiative, High Tunnel System, Long Leaf Pine Initiative, Working Lands for Wildlife-Quail only, and Conservation Activity Plans.

USDA program applications are accepted on a continuous basis. **However, applications must be submitted by November 2, 2018 to be considered for FY2019 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.

We will accept applications for other subaccounts at any time, but those applications will NOT be evaluated/ranked/obligated until an official batching date is announced later in this calendar year or early 2019-pending the next Farm Bill.

For more information or to receive an application contact the local NRCS office at (941)907-0011 or visit <http://www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

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OFFICE STAFF:

Angela Bright	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 5-7 minute speech on the topic selected by the Association of Florida Conservation Districts, "Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home." Palmetto High School student Elanie Mason, placed 1st and was awarded \$150. Placing 2nd, also from Palmetto High School was Mia Kielmann (\$100), and in 3rd place was Southeast High School student Ngan Le (\$75). Mason tied for 2nd place in an area competition in Hillsborough County held in July.

Staff hosted 3 participants with the help of 3 volunteers.

Manasota Regional Envirothon

Manatee High School's *Green is the New Black* team was the Manatee County winner of the Manasota Regional Envirothon. The team represented Manatee County at the state contest held at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park and placed 12th overall, earning special recognition in the soils/land use category. 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 57th 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 overall highest scoring team was from Buffalo Creek Middle School. Winning teams from Southeast High School, Buffalo Creek Middle School and the senior 4-H team competed at the state contest.

Staff assisted 38 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 highlight 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 83 participants with the help of 3 volunteers.

2019 Manatee River SWCD Events

February 7	Envirothon
February 28	MRSWCD Land Judging
March 15	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 2018 (Oct 2017-Sept 2018)

Customers assisted	6422
Students assisted through educational events/classroom visits	351
Adult education through farm tours and training	138

2018 Conservation Applied (Acres) (Oct 1, 2017-Sep 30, 2018)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other programs	1,423
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Services Provided

Natural Resource Information. NRCS access to recent and historical aerial photographs, 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

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Soils Unit/Extension website
<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/manatee/agriculture/soils-unit/>
MRSWCD website
<http://www.manateeriverswcd.com>

Farm City Week

For more information contact

Crystal Snodgrass/ County Extension Director at 722-4524 ext. 1812

- Nov 7** Edible Ag-Manatee County Agricultural Museum 6-8:30 pm. Adults only.
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/edible-ag-tickets-49607306790>
- Nov 8** MRSWCD Speech Contest: "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper" Pre-registration required.
Rules posted: <http://www.manateeriverswcd.com/>
- Nov 9** Farm Tour
- Nov 13** Kiwanis Luncheon/Agriculturalist of the Year
- Nov 15** Ag Venture
- Nov 16** Agriculture Hall of Fame Luncheon
- Nov 17** 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 <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/manatee/agriculture/livestock--forage-crops/>