

## **Soil and Water Gazette**

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

**Fall 2019**

#### **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 6:00 pm at the Manatee Extension Office in Palmetto.

#### **Board Members**

Paul Howard	Chairman
John J. O'Connor, Jr.	Vice-Chairman
Ben King	Treasurer
Callon C. (Buddy) Keen, Jr.	Supervisor
Julie Tillett	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, and Conservation Activity Plans.

USDA program applications are accepted on a continuous basis.

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.

**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/>**

**In this Issue**

History of the District.....1  
 EQIP Update.....1  
 MRSWCD News.....2  
 MRSWCD Events.....3  
 NRCS Corner.....3  
 Farm City Week Calendar.....4  
 Prospect Beef Show.....4

**OFFICE STAFF:**

Angela Bright	Administrative Specialist II
Israel Vega	District Conservationist
Jeremy Ansel	Soil Conservation Technician
Christine Russo	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, "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper." Palmetto High School student Megan Hosker, placed 1<sup>st</sup>, winning \$150. Placing 2<sup>nd</sup>, also from Palmetto High School was Leah Achenbach (\$100). Hosker placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in an area competition in Hillsborough County held in July.

**Staff hosted 2 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 UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center in Live Oak and placed 8<sup>th</sup> overall, earning special recognition in the wildlife 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 132 students with the help of 40 volunteers.**



**Manatee County Land Judging Competition**

The 58<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 4-H individual and one senior 4-H team also competed. The overall highest scoring team was from Buffalo Creek Middle School. Several top teams went to the state contest in late March.

**Staff assisted 60 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 showcasing 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 2020 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 101 participants with the help of 8 volunteers.**

### 2020 Manatee River SWCD Events

February 6	Envirothon
February 20	MRSWCD Land Judging
March 13	Farm Tour



United States Department of Agriculture

#### Natural Resources Conservation Service Corner

**Conservation Stewardship Program.** This program is a great way for producers to maintain and improve their existing conservation systems as well as adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. CSP addresses resource concerns such as soil, water, air quality, and plant/animal resources. The program will pay participants based on their level of conservation performance in an annual payment for a five year contract period. Eligible applicants must meet the stewardship threshold for at least two priority resource concerns, they must be in control of the land with which they are applying, and agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one priority resource concern by the end of the contract. Cropland, pastureland, and forestland are some examples of qualifying land types.  
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/fl/programs/financial/csp/>

#### Statistics 2019 (Oct 2018-Sept 2019)

Customers assisted	3,793
Students assisted through educational events/classroom visits	662
Adult education through farm tours and training	210

#### 2019 Conservation Applied (Acres) (Oct 1, 2018-Sep 30, 2019)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other programs	2,643
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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**

1303 17<sup>th</sup> St. W.  
Palmetto, FL 34221

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

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 12** MRSWCD Speech Contest: “Where would we BEE without Pollinators?” Pre-registration required.
- Nov 14** Ag Venture
- Nov 15** Farm Tour
- Nov 16** Beef Workshop and Prospect Show
- Nov 19** Kiwanis Luncheon/Agriculturalist of the Year
- Nov 21** Agriculture Hall of Fame Luncheon

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/>