

Soil and Water Gazette
Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District
Fall 2014

A Brief History of the District

The **Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District (MRSWCD)** was chartered by the State of Florida on October 3, 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. Keen, Jr.	Supervisor
Ben King	Supervisor

2014 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 21, 2014 to be considered for 2015 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.

The EQIP program has been the most widely used USDA conservation program in Manatee County. 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/>

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:

Janie Besselman	Administrative Specialist II
Vacant	District Conservationist
Kayla Milburn	Soil Conservationist
John Noll	Soil Conservation Planner
Gail Somodi	Soil Conservation Supervisor

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

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 101. 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, "Dig Deeper-What are the Mysteries in the Soil?" Lakewood Ranch High School student Alisha Erozer, placed 1st and was awarded \$150. Placing 2nd was Bayshore High School student Cheyenne Atkinson (\$100), and in 3rd place was Haile Middle School student Samantha Baum (\$75). Erozer went on to win the area and state competitions.

Staff hosted 7 participants with the help of 3 volunteers.

Manasota Regional Envirothon

Manatee High School's *Amoeba Alert* team was the Manatee County winner of the Manasota Regional Envirothon. Team *Amoeba Alert* was unavailable for the state competition, Team *Zaggin* from Manatee High School filled in and brought home the Forestry Recognition Award. 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 2014 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

team winner was from Buffalo Creek Middle School. One Junior and one Senior 4-H team also competed. The winning teams went on to compete at the state level. All Manatee county teams placed in the top 5 in their respective categories at state.

Staff assisted 58 students with the help of 9 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 2015 please call 941-907-0011 x 101.** If you would like your farm to be considered as a stop on the tour please call us.

Staff hosted 94 participants with the help of 6 volunteers.

2015 Manatee River SWCD Events

February 5	Envirothon
February 19	MRSWCD Land Judging
March 20	Farm Tour



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service Corner

Statistics 2014

Customers assisted	8,999
Students assisted through educational events/classroom visits	302
Adult education through farm tours and training	199

2014 Conservation Planning (Acres)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other programs	5,863
--	-------

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/>

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**

1303 17th St. W.
Palmetto, FL 34221

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

Farm City Week November 13 – November 21

For more information contact

Samantha Kennedy/County Extension Director at 722-4524

- Nov 10** MRSWCD Speech Contest: Topic-Hardworking Pollinators-Why are they our local heroes? Pre-registration required. Rules posted: <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/soils>
- Nov 13** AgVenture
- Nov 15** Beef Workshop and Prospect Show
- Nov 18** Kiwanis Luncheon/Agriculturalist of the Year
- Nov 20** Agriculture Hall of Fame Luncheon
- Nov 21** Farm Tour

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 Carlson-Kirby 722-4524 or visit <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/agriculture/livestock/>