



United States Department of Agriculture

Georgia Natural Resources Conservation Service Outreach Plan FY 2014

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Outreach Summary

Employees of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Georgia share the same vision for programs they deliver as our Secretary of Agriculture, "*All clients will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.*" To accomplish this vision, we are continually gathering new information and developing unique and innovative delivery methods that will assure our success. Assessing our clients' needs is top priority. Those clients with unique circumstances that prevent them from learning about our programs will be provided opportunities to share in the programs for which they qualify.

When barriers to awareness and understanding are found they will be eliminated. In their place, we will implement processes that ensure that everyone can take advantage of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. Benchmarks are being established that will help us determine our effectiveness. Continual evaluation is necessary because we believe *OUTREACH* never stops and can continually be improved.

Georgia Outreach Mission Statement

To provide services to all people in a manner that improves their understanding of USDA programs and services, increases their participation in USDA programs, and encourages them to participate in resource planning, and the decision-making process.

This will be accomplished by:

- Providing information on USDA programs and services to all groups.
- Gaining the trust and acceptance of underserved individuals and groups.
- Assisting underserved individuals and groups with identifying their natural resource concerns. Providing them with technical and financial assistance available from USDA, partners, and other agencies or organizations that would help them improve their land and/or communities.
- Providing assistance in understanding programs, how to use programs, and completing forms.
- Developing partnerships to assist with reaching underserved customers.

Outreach Target Audiences and Historically Underserved Groups

Beginning Farmer or Rancher

- A Beginning Farmer or Rancher means an individual or entity who:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of an entity.
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.

Socially Disadvantaged

- A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities. These groups consist of the following:
 - American Indians or Alaskan Natives
 - Asians
 - Blacks or African Americans
 - Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
 - Hispanics

Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher

- A Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher or Forest Owner is an applicant: With direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years, and Who has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years.
- An entity or joint operation can be a Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher if all individual members independently qualify.

Current Outreach Partnership Agreements in Georgia

Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - Conduct three (3) informational workshops/meetings for underserved landowners.
 - Develop multi-media outreach kit.
 - Host Field Day/Demonstration.
 - Complete twenty (20) one-on-one field visit meetings with underserved producers.
 - Host regional conference
 - Present at conferences

Digging Roots Educational Farm, Inc. – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - Conduct two (2) “One USDA Farm Field Days” informational meetings for underserved landowners.
 - Organize four (4) “One USDA Mini-Field Day” events that scheduled place after 5:00 p.m. on a weekday evening.

Coastal Georgia RC&D Council – Exp. September 15, 2013 – Extended to March 15, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - Conduct ten (10) informational meetings for underserved landowners

GA Assoc. of Conservation District Supervisors – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - Announce funding availability to forty (40) SWCDs
 - Request proposals from SWCDs for mini grants
 - Announce SWCD recipients of mini grants at GACDS Annual Meeting
 - Coordinate with SWCDs to complete seven (7) local workshops. Workshop dates, times and locations will be posted on both the GACDS and GSWCC websites. Promote mid-year accomplishments on GACDS website and monthly report to membership
 - Work with SWCDs to complete eight (8) additional workshops. Workshop dates, times and locations will be posted on both the GACDS and GSWCC websites. Promote project accomplishments on GACDS website and monthly report to membership
 - Highlight accomplishments at GACDS Annual Meeting

Upper Ocmulgee River RC&D Council, Inc. – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Chris Groskreutz
 - Conduct three (3) Multicultural Sustainable Agriculture & Leadership Training Conferences for underserved landowners
 - Host four (4) “How To Install Conservation Practices” workshops.

Athens Land Trust, Inc. – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Chris Groskreutz
 - Visit NRCS field offices in the region to meet with NRCS field staff
 - (1) Meet with local organizations to develop contact list and publicize the program to contacts (2) Release tentative workshop schedule for the coming year, (3) Publicize first workshop
 - Conduct six (6) educational workshop/site visit

Two Rivers RC&D Council, Inc. – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Chris Groskreutz
 - Compile mailing list and media outlet contacts to reach target audience
 - Contract and develop training products (How-To videos, PowerPoints, Bookmarks, BMP Installation circulars, etc.)
 - Develop Participant Questionnaire as metric to quantify project’s success
 - Conduct four (4) “after hours” workshops using training products and partners

City of Adel – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Stan Moore
 - Conduct ten (10) outreach informational meetings for underserved landowners.
 - Conduct ten (10) one-on-one meetings with diverse producers for demonstration project sites.
 - Host four (4) regional development sessions with USDA, state, local and community organizations.

Lower Chattahoochee River SWCD – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Richard Hosmer
 - Hold three (3) Outreach Demonstrations/Workshops informational meetings for underserved landowners.

Broad River Soil and Water Conservation District – Exp. September 30, 2014

- NRCS Liaison Carol Boss
 - Organize organic farming, micro irrigation, and grazing workshop
 - Host four (4) regional targeted program delivery workshops
 - Co-host one (1) small farm conference
 - Provide financial assistance to support agriculture related training workshops statewide
 - Provide financial assistance to youth groups for agricultural related opportunities and career paths

Athens Land Trust – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Chris Groskreutz
 - Market and publicize farm incubation and land-lease programs
 - Market and promote farmer business training program and agriculture workshops and programs
 - Hold an eight (8) week farm business development program for underserved farmers that promote a “One USDA” theme in which the new and underserved individuals, groups, veterans, and communities in Georgia can learn about the variety of USDA programs available.
 - Create a **ATHENS LAND TRUST FARM OUTREACH PROGRAM Fact Sheet** ad and provide copies to NRCS

Broad River SWCD – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Chris Groskreutz
 - Organize organic farming workshop
 - Organize micro irrigation workshop
 - Organize grazing workshop
 - Host regional targeted program delivery workshops
 - Co-host one (1) small farm conference
 - Provide financial assistance to support agriculture related training workshops statewide
 - Provide financial assistance to youth groups for agricultural related opportunities and career paths

Central Savannah River RC&D Council – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - The council will publish a minimum of five (5) news releases to area papers announcing workshop opportunities as well as distribute brochures and flyers promoting workshops.
 - The Central Savannah RC&D Council expects to provide education and training to a minimum of two hundred (200) individuals through five (5) pond management workshops. The agenda at each workshop will include presentations from “One USDA” representatives: NRCS, FSA, and RD
 - Create a **Pond Management Education Workshop Fact Sheet** ad and provide copies to NRCS

Georgia Organics – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - Conduct two (2) classroom workshops with overview of NRCS programs
 - Conduct eight (8) field workshop with overview of NRCS programs
 - Hold two to four (2-4) Saturday workshops in order to accommodate varying schedules of producers
 - Record and produce videos of at least two workshops highlighting educational content and NRCS programs to be shared and disseminated among Georgia Organics, the Southwest Georgia Project, NRCS, and other legitimate partners
 - Reach 100 socially disadvantaged producers in southwest Georgia over the 2013-2015 period with educational workshops highlighting NCRS programs
 - Increase the number of producers aware of NRCS programs by 400%. Currently, it’s estimated that only 20% of the socially disadvantaged producers who compose this constituency are aware of NRCS programs.
 - Enroll at least 20-25 socially disadvantaged producers in NRCS programs by the conclusion of 2015.
 - Record progress in awareness of and participation in NRCS programs through consistent workshop evaluations and follow-up, including sign-in sheets with voluntary diversity information.
 - Promote workshops, NRCS programs and grower participation through advertising material and the Georgia Organics communication network (website,

quarterly print publication, monthly e-news). Measurable outcomes for this deliverable include:

- Flyers and other promotional materials
- A minimum of 13,000 individuals reached quarterly through the Dirt publication.
- A minimum of 10,000 individuals reached monthly through the e-Dirt.
- A minimum of 1200 individuals reached through the monthly Grower e-news.
- Translate the StrikeForce Initiative into practical impact, by targeting southwest Georgia. Note, this is one of the larger goals of the project
- Create a **Sustaining Southwest Georgia: Empowering Socially Disadvantaged Producers in an Underserved Region Fact Sheet** ad and provide copies to NRCS

Georgia Micro Enterprise Network (GMEN) – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Chris Groskreutz
 - GMEN Road Show will connect with at least 20 current and potential partners to increase awareness provide information about workshops and trainings, disseminate information about special initiatives, and promote the One USDA theme.
 - Provision of technical assistance for at least 20 current and potential partners to educate GMEN members about the needs of underserved farmers and value added businesses. The focus is on an increased amount of customer awareness.
 - Two (2) Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship conferences designed to meet all Specific Priority Deliverables. Attendance of potential USDA “customers” is expected to be at least 185
 - Three (3) town hall style meetings to discuss issues and share resources. Meetings will be designed to meet all Specific Priority Deliverables
 - Development of a web page or web booklet. The web page will be designed to provide up to date information and success stories to meet all Specific Priority Deliverables.
 - Establish and grow GMEN’s social media presence among farmers and value added entrepreneurs. A large part of GMEN’s social media message will include the One USDA theme and all other priority deliverables.

Golden Triangle RC&D Council – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - Conduct a total of six (6) educational/field day workshops to disseminate information regarding the diverse NRCS programs (with special emphasis on Working Lands for Wildlife, and Long Leaf Pine) with workshops being held within a centralized location covering 2-3 counties per workshop. This will ensure that all counties are being served.
 - Produce Public Service Announcements through local newspapers to promote activities and events related to the Outreach Campaign

- Updates made quarterly on the GTRCD website under Outreach Campaign for progress of the project

National Network of Forest Practitioners – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - Educate 200 underserved landowners on the potential in forest management and conservation activities available through USDA resources
 - Conduct 8 outreach workshops and field days in Strike Force counties with high African-American land ownership
 - Convene seven (7) workshop with African-American Forest landowners, introducing NRCS programs
 - Convene one (1) field workshop that demonstrates conservation-based forest management.
 - Demonstrate income options and wealth-building opportunities for conservation-based forest management and how they relate to NRCS programs, particularly EQIP, and WHIP as well as WRP, CSP and other financial incentive and easement programs.
 - Provide follow-up and one-on-one assistance for 40 under-served landowners enrolling in various NRCS programs.
 - Produce and edit online video outreach tools that demonstrate possible USDA program successes

National Women in Agriculture Association – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Chris Groskreutz
 - In October 2013, the initial NWIAA-GA-WIAA's strategy project team meeting will be held with partners, extension and other outreach educators, producers and producer vendors. The project team will develop a toolkit of natural conservation, vegetables and fruits, and nutrition handbook in color for approximately 1,400 participants.
 - NWIAA's "one year" deliverable schedule will be successful in that it will provide sustainable natural resource and conservation outreach education and workshops that reach over 14,000 socially disadvantaged and underserved individuals.
 - The next step will enhance NWIAA's website with photographs, calendar and educational charts that can be utilized at workshops and outreach meetings; and a user friendly handout will be provided to assist socially disadvantaged producers when marketing their produce to vendors and for shipping.
 - NWIAA's Conservation Guidance Agriculture classes and hands on farm workshops will be held once every quarter for three hours training classes at convenient urban and rural location in Georgia including NWIAA's 4th Annual Symposium. This program could potentially serve over 1,400 rural and urban socially disadvantaged farmers/producers.
 - Conservation and Agriculture/Farm information using Quarterly Newsletter; over 5,000 people can be reached.

- Update User Friendly On-Line Website Education at www.nwiaa.org and social media (Facebook and Twitter).
- NWIAA & GA-WIAAA's agriculture classes and farm workshops will be held once per month for 3 hours training across the state of GA

Seven Rivers RC&D Council – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Daniel Westcot
 - Organize and host three (3) statewide workshops for land users/producers
 - Provide financial assistance to support agriculture-related statewide training workshops
 - Create a **Team Agriculture Georgia Underserved Landowner Outreach Project Fact Sheet** ad and provide copies to NRCS

Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture, Inc. – Exp. September 30, 2015

- NRCS Liaison Chris Groskreutz
 - Inventory existing farmer contacts to identify those who may need assistance with NRCS enrollment
 - Hold two NRCS and USDA program related workshops in partnership with other organizations as follows:
 - Truly Living Well mini-conference in Atlanta featuring Will Allen of Growing Power, Inc., on Friday and Saturday, October 25 and 26, 2013.
 - Georgia Organics annual conference on Saturday and Sunday, February 22-23, 2014
 - Confer with Cooperative Extension agents, agricultural teachers, farmer associations, and community organizations to identify potentially underserved farmers (especially beginning, small-scale and minority) in each sector of the target area. We will also seek to identify landowners who might benefit from conservation and woodland related NRCS programs.
 - Distribute flyers, posters and public service announcements advertising all relevant USDA programs, with emphasis on NRCS programs, and regional workshops to strategic locations in all 13 counties of the target area.
 - Obtain electronic and print media coverage throughout the region to spread the word about NRCS programs and benefits to each county in the target area.
 - Meet with small groups of farmers throughout the region, beginning with networks of farmers with whom we are affiliated and then network with other farmers through their contacts.
 - Provide individual technical assistance to 100 farmers to support their enrollment in EQIP and other NRCS conservation and stewardship programs. Farmers often need help completing applications and following through to the results.
 - Follow-up on individual applications to ensure success by contacting farmers and appropriate NRCS offices, and obtaining resolution on at least 90% of applications filed during the project period.

Communications Plan

Communication Strategies

Strategies that support *improving visibility of the agency*:

- Collaborate with various media outlets to ensure proper sharing of information.
- Identify and inform local, state and federally elected leaders as well as their staff about types of assistance, programs and events.
- Attend conferences and public events where potential clients can become better acquainted with the agency and what we do.
- Utilize, manage and continue to improve our social media tools. These are becoming more important to reaching customers and sharing important program related information and announcements.
 - **Twitter**-We have established the account in FY13 and gradually built momentum by adding followers and following others in agriculture and government sectors. We have noticed that sharing options like *Retweets* and *Mentions* help spread the word about our efforts. Twitter also allows us to reach more non-traditional customers.
 - We have 306 followers, follow 585 accounts and have posted 354 tweets. We plan to continue growing the account and finding more efficient and effective ways of using Twitter as a supplementary outreach tool. We would like to reach 600 followers by the end of FY14 and reach 1,000 tweets.
 - **GovDelivery**- we have been using this email subscription service successfully since early CY13. It helps reach customers interested in specific information. They voluntarily sign up for alerts, emails, application sign-ups, etc. This is a great resource for our staff to use in sharing targeted information. In FY14, we will work towards using the system more and publicizing it at field days and events so that we can get more people subscribed.
 - We currently have 200 GovDelivery subscribers signed up to receive YouTube updates, 194 GovDelivery subscribers signed up to receive Twitter updates, and 927 News Release subscribers (Total GA GovDelivery Subscribers: 1,321). We aim to increase subscribers to at least 2,000 customers by the end of FY14.
 - **YouTube**- We are working to build this social media site. We have uploaded five original videos and shared others via our personal YouTube Channel. All videos have been Agricultural/Conservation related.

- 6 users have subscribed to our channel and as of date and our videos have been viewed a total of 1,033 times. We hope to grow the page by adding more videoed success stories, special projects, information videos, etc. We hope to upload at least 5 more videos and gain 24 new subscribers in FY14.
- Enhance the “OneUSDA” outreach efforts by partnering with additional sister USDA agencies to ensure we are represented at times when staff is not available.

Strategies that support *improving the effectiveness of the agency’s communications*:

- Update and design brochures, displays and website to stay fresh in the reader’s mind.
 - Effectively use and manage new website while maintaining 508 compliance in all uploaded PDFs by the end of FY14.
- Improve clearance process for web content and also increase web content updates.
- Convert success stories, program announcements, and news releases into publications in the clients’ respective communities and provide templates for field office use.
- Partner and interact more with other community based organizations so they develop a better understanding of our mission and services.
- Implement more trainings/workshops for employees (writing, 508 compliance, presentation skills, photography, etc.) at Area meetings or other appropriate venues.
- Better utilize the Georgia Public Affairs Council.
- Increase volunteer (Earth Team) involvement.
 - We hope to spotlight our state’s Earth Team Volunteers on our Earth Team web page at least quarterly. PAS will reach out to area coordinators to see if they have outstanding nominations.
 - We will also strive to work with the current GA Earth Team Coordinator to boost enrollment and participation. We would like to enroll 50 new volunteers in FY14 and log at least 1,000 volunteer hours.
- Work better with our Soils Team to highlight the *Soil Health* campaign here in Georgia and make it more relevant to our audiences. We would like to highlight this section on our website’s home page.

Programs and Services

NRCS Programs

The Legislative Branch of the government authorizes the USDA, through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to administer and deliver programs that help local entities identify and solve problems that affect the Natural Resources.

Agricultural Water Enhancement Programs – AWEPP

- The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program is a voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to assist agricultural producers. The assistance provided enables producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities that are consistent with State water law on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality.

Conservation Technical Assistance – CTA

- Conservation Technical Assistance is provided to district cooperators and other land users in the planning and application of conservation treatment to control erosion and improve the quantity and quality of soil resources, improve and conserve water, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, conserve energy, improve woodland, pasture and range conditions, and reduce upstream flooding; all to protect and enhance the natural resource base.

Conservation Stewardship Program – CSP

- Conservation Stewardship Program is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands. Working lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pasture, and range land, as well as forested land that is an incidental part of an agriculture operation. The program provides equitable access to benefits to all producers, regardless of size of operation, crops produced, or geographic location.

Conservation Reserve Program – CRP (Farm Service Agency)

- The Conservation Reserve Program reduces soil erosion, protects the nation's ability to produce food and fiber, reduces sedimentation in streams and lakes, improves water quality, establishes wildlife habitat, and enhances forest and wetland resources. It encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other cropland or other

environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips, or riparian buffers. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices.

Emergency Conservation Program – ECP (Farm Service Agency)

- The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) is for the restoration of conservation practices damaged by severe weather.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program – EQIP

- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. It provides a conservation program for farmers, ranchers and owners of private, non-industrial forest land that promotes agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality as compatible national goals. Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land. EQIP provides technical, educational, and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program provides assistance to farmers and ranchers in complying with Federal, State, and tribal environmental laws, and encourages environmental enhancement. The purposes of the program are achieved through the implementation of a conservation plan which includes structural, vegetative, and land management practices on eligible land.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program – FRPP

- The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program designed to protect agricultural use and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. The program protects valuable farm and ranch lands for future generations. This is achieved by working cooperatively with State, Tribal, and local governments and non-governmental organizations; the United States Department of Agriculture is authorized to facilitate and provide funding for the purchase of conservation easements and other interests in eligible land that is subject to a pending offer from an eligible entity.

Grassland Reserve Program – GRP

- The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program that assists landowners and operators in protecting grazing uses and related conservation values on eligible private grazing, range, and pasture land. The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations; maintaining and improving plant and animal biodiversity; and

protection of grasslands and shrub lands from the threat of conversion to uses other than grazing. Participants choosing to enroll voluntarily limit future use of the land for a certain time frame while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices.

Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative – GLCI Conservation of Private Grazing Lands – CPGL

- The Grazing Land Conservation Initiative and the Conservation of Private Grazing Lands legislation work hand in hand to ensure that technical, educational, and related assistance are provided to people that own private grazing lands. Heightened technical assistance offers producers an opportunity to improve grazing land management, protect soil from erosive wind and water, use more energy efficient ways to produce livestock and feed, conserve water, provide habitat for wildlife, sustain forage and grazing plants, use plants to sequester greenhouse gases and increase soil organic matter, and using grazing lands as a source of biomass energy and raw materials for industrial products.

Healthy Forests Reserve Program – HFRP

- The Healthy Forests Reserve Program is a voluntary program established for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems to: 1) promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, 2) improve biodiversity; and, 3) enhance carbon sequestration. Program implementation has been delegated by the Secretary of Agriculture to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Plant Materials Program – PMC

- The purpose of the program is to provide native plants that can help solve natural resource problems. Beneficial uses for which plant material may be developed include biomass production, carbon sequestration, erosion reduction, wetland restoration, water quality improvement, streambank and riparian area protection, coastal dune stabilization, and other special conservation treatment needs. Scientists at the Plant Materials Center seek out plants that show promise for meeting an identified conservation need and test their performance. After species are proven, they are released to the private sector for commercial production. The work at the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center is carried out cooperatively with state and Federal agencies, commercial businesses, and seed and nursery associations.

Soil Survey Program – SS

- The National Cooperative Soil Survey Program is a partnership led by NRCS of Federal land management agencies, state agricultural experiment stations and state and local units of government that provide soil survey information necessary for understanding, managing, conserving and sustaining the nation's limited soil resources.

Wetland Reserve Program – WRP

- The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program that assists landowners in restoring, protecting, and enhancing wetlands on eligible private or tribal lands while maximizing wildlife habitat benefits. The emphasis of WRP is to protect, restore, and enhance functions and values of wetland ecosystems on privately owned lands to attain habitat for migratory birds and other wetland-dependent wildlife and protection and improvement of water quality. Agricultural production ceases from lands enrolled in WRP, but WRP lands are usually marginal agricultural lands poorly suited for efficient agricultural productions.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program – WHIP

- The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program provides financial incentives to develop habitat for fish and wildlife on private lands. The Natural Resources Conservation Service administers WHIP to provide both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. Participants agree to implement a wildlife habitat development plan and NRCS agrees to provide cost-share assistance for the initial implementation of wildlife habitat development practices.

Georgia Outreach Goals and Strategies

GOAL 1: Inform and educate the underserved about NRCS programs and services that could be beneficial to them concerning eligibility to participate in NRCS Programs.

Strategies:

- Work with District Conservationist in counties where there is a decline in program participation and have been identified as needing further outreach assistance.
- Work with District Conservationists in the state to increase potential Hispanic participation within their area.
- Feature minority farmers that are participating in the WRP and feature in the Minority Landowners Magazine.

- With assistance from district conservationists, conduct informal workshops to better inform the underserved about NRCS programs.
- Partner with community based organizations, RC&D's, 1890 Land Grant Universities, and other community groups to address barriers that limit participation in USDA programs.

GOAL 2: Coordinate all outreach activities and provide statewide leadership.

Strategies:

- Revise the State Outreach Plan.
- Identify NRCS programs and eligibility requirements in order to reach underserved customers.
- Develop one process for the state to use to evaluate program delivery and outreach efforts to clients.
- Produce a quarterly newsletter to better inform employees of outreach initiatives.

GOAL 3: Provide current client base data for each county in the State to determine the number of underserved in each county.

Strategy:

- Provide demographic data for each county.

GOAL 4: Increase participation of historically underserved farmers and ranchers in all NRCS programs and services.

Strategies:

- Conduct one Community Based Leadership workshop aimed at educating small and limited resource farmers and ranchers about the various ways in which local people can participate in farm bill programs.
- Utilize information from workshop to better inform field employees on how to improve service to a diverse customer base.
- Utilize farmers, ranchers, and landowners to identify potential nominees for the Small Farmer Awards.

GOAL 5: Coordinate state wide outreach efforts.

Strategies:

- Provide a report to the ASTC/Programs of the outreach review and actions taken.
- Continue to identify barriers and actions to remove barriers that restrict or limit participation in NRCS programs.
- Talk with landowners and facilitate one session in each area to discuss barriers.
- Provide Farm Bill information at meetings.

- Conduct door-to-door outreach in rural areas throughout the state in order to reach the underserved community.
- Work with Community Based Organizations, educational institutions, and agricultural partners to discuss and distribute information on Farm Bill programs.

Georgia Outreach Team FY 2014

State Public Affairs Specialist

Chris Groskreutz
355 East Hancock Avenue, Mail Stop 212
Athens, GA 30601
Email: Chris.Groskreutz@ga.usda.gov
Office: 706-546-2069
Mobile: 706-338-1367
Fax: 706-546-2120

Assistant State Public Affairs Specialist

Ronald D. Morton
355 E. Hancock Avenue, Mail Stop 212
Athens, GA 30601
Email: Ron.Morton2@ga.usda.gov
Office: 706-546-2312
Fax: 706-546-2120

Public Affairs Specialist

Amelia Hines
1291 Greensboro Highway, Suite A107
Watkinsville, Georgia 30677
Email: Amelia.Hines@ga.usda.gov
Office: 706-769-3990 Ext. 113

Outreach Coordinators

Vacant
1600 South Main Street
Greensboro, GA 30642
Email:
Office: 706-453-7021 Ext. 3
Mobile:
Fax:

Daniel Westcot
801 Main Street, Room 228
Perry, GA 31069
Email: Daniel.Westcot@ga.usda.gov
Office: 478-987-2280 Ext. 3
Mobile: 478-662-0609
Fax: 478-988-4781

Outreach Barriers and Methods of Removal

Beginning, Small, Socially Disadvantaged, and Limited Resource Farmers

Barriers	Actions to Remove Barriers
<p>1. May have less formal education than the norm, but considerable farming experience.</p>	<p>1. One-on-one farm visits: NRCS reps should <u>listen</u> to these farmers and learn from their experience, then share some program options that may fit their needs.</p>
<p>2. May be wary of government programs and people who represent government agencies.</p>	<p>2. NRCS representatives should dress appropriately when working with these farmers, i.e., don't look like a bureaucrat. Identify community leaders and involve them in passing the message.</p>
<p>3. Many are 50 years old or older. The older farmers may be wary of agency representatives that are younger.</p>	<p>3. The NRCS reps are getting older too; this may not be much of a problem right now. However, older, more experienced NRCS employees need to guide and work closely with younger, less experienced employees when reaching out to these customers. Teaming up for initial meetings may remove the barrier.</p>
<p>4. Don't welcome bureaucratic printed materials.</p>	<p>4. Forget mailing bureaucratic program documents to these farmers. Keep printed materials simple and clear, one-page fact sheets, extra sheets to put in church bulletins, tri-fold brochures. Don't mail these items, leave them with customers after a visit, or hand them out at meetings.</p>
<p>5. Probably don't watch a lot of TV.</p>	<p>5. Provide radio spots to locally popular radio stations. Keep these spots simple and direct.</p>
<p>6. Role of the community church may play an important role in decision making for the individual farmer.</p>	<p>6. Recognize that the local church and functions at the church may provide opportunities to communicate programs and services.</p>

<p>7. May not be appropriately targeted to get NRCS program and service information.</p> <p>8. NRCS Service Center may not be conveniently located for LRF clients.</p> <p>9. May not have the same view or perspective of farming, partnerships, etc., as NRCS.</p> <p>10. May not have made it on the NRCS radar screen.</p> <p>11. LRF's may learn better from their neighbors, rather than a government rep.</p> <p>12. May still not feel comfortable coming to a Service Center or dealing with NRCS.</p> <p>13. LRF's aren't familiar with NRCS programs, services or policies.</p> <p>14. NRCS policy may not appear to fit LRF needs.</p> <p>15. NRCS may not always follow through to assure opportunities for participation.</p> <p>16. We may not keep track of our customers.</p> <p>17. May not have the resources to participate in programs.</p> <p>18. Conservation practices may be too restrictive or costly.</p>	<p>7. Develop an outreach plan specifically for minority, limited resource farmers.</p> <p>8. Use computer technology to bring office to customer as much as possible.</p> <p>9. We need training and to read available books that will educate us on our minority, limited resource farmers.</p> <p>10. Identify and locate LRF customers: use Ag-Census and minority farms registry.</p> <p>11. Support formation of farmer networks and mentoring programs for small farmers.</p> <p>12. We need training on how to effectively reach out to these customers.</p> <p>13. Provide training and information on policy and locally led conservation programs to help increase participation.</p> <p>14. Develop LRF farm policy and technical services that reflect the circumstances LRF's face.</p> <p>15. Develop innovative ways to improve access to learning opportunities and to encourage participation.</p> <p>16. Periodically update customer profile information and mailing list.</p> <p>17. Look at the possibility of increased cost-share rates. Look at the possibility of other agencies providing additional cost-share.</p> <p>18. Look at ways to implement BMP's with low cost structures or methods.</p>
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Native American Indians

Barriers	Actions to Remove Barriers
<p>1. May be suspicious of Federal programs and agency representatives.</p>	<p>1. NRCS in Georgia should train all field staff and conservation partners working with Native American Indians on the locally lead conservation process and how it relates to tribes, tribal law, etc. Involve tribal leaders.</p>
<p>2. Cultural morals and tribal governmental practices may be barriers to participation in farm bill programs.</p>	<p>2. Make sure key agency representatives are trained on USDA programs, interpersonal skills, effective communication techniques, and Native American Indian culture. States work with tribes to provide training.</p>
<p>3. Tribe has reservations about taxation under the farm bill programs. Individuals do not want to be taxed.</p>	<p>3. Resolve issue with facts from an authoritative source.</p>
<p>4. Language.</p>	<p>4. Schedule follow-up meetings with tribes to discuss how to continue meeting their needs.</p>
<p>5. Native American Indian ranchers and farmers may receive information mainly from local radio stations.</p>	<p>5. Staff assignments should take into consideration.</p>
<p>6. Tribal members may read local newspapers rather than the major newspapers.</p>	<p>6. Work with Native American representatives closely to include non-English speaking members in discussions through translators.</p>
<p>7. Owing to experience or unfamiliarity with these clients, NRCS personnel may feel somewhat uncomfortable dealing with Native American Indian customers.</p>	<p>7. Provide radio spots to local stations. Work with tribal representative to develop spots.</p>
<p>8. Native American Indian ranchers and farmers may receive information mainly from local radio stations.</p>	<p>8. Provide information to local newspapers and work with staff and editors to develop information that is likely to be printed.</p>
<p>9. Tribal members may read local newspapers rather than the major newspapers.</p>	<p>9. Provide training and one-on-one opportunities accompanied by an experienced person.</p>

Hispanic Americans

Barriers	Actions to Remove Barriers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language: may not speak or read English. 2. Spanish speaking farmers may not speak and read the same Spanish. There are language differences between Hispanic Americans from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and those from elsewhere. 3. Cultural differences must be accommodated: for example, Hispanic men may be reluctant to wear glasses; therefore the Hispanic news media prefer articles and releases in 14 point type. 4. Hispanic customers may listen to their local Spanish speaking radio and TV stations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Printed materials and radio and television public service announcements should be provided in Spanish. 2. Not only that, translations should meet the needs of the different Hispanic customers, i.e., Puerto Rican, Cuban or other. Differences in the Spanish language should be recognized and accommodated. 3. Provide releases and articles to Hispanic news media in appropriate type size. Check with individual papers before submittal. 4. Target these stations with radio and TV spots.

Women

Barriers	Actions to Remove Barriers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May be wary of male attitudes towards them. 2. May not be recognized as primary business manager on the farm. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give female customers the same serious and courteous consideration as we should be giving all customers. 2. Assume, unless you know differently, that the female farmer is your primary client who manages the farm business with full authority.

Disabled Customers

Barriers	Actions to Remove Barriers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May not have easy access to our offices. 2. May not be adequately served by NRCS. 3. May not know about our programs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that physically challenged clients are appropriately accommodated at agency locations. 2. Develop innovative ways for disabled customers to participate in our programs. 3. Identify potential clients and provide information in appropriate format.