

MACON COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

191 Thomas Heights Road
Franklin, NC 28734

July 1, 2007–June 30, 2008



ANNUAL REPORT

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Statement of Adoption

The Macon Soil and Water Conservation District is. . .

a subdivision of state and local government in partnership with federal government, which develops and oversees conservation programs to meet the needs of Macon County. This is accomplished by providing technical assistance and services to all landowners and land users, free conservation literature and educational programs that promote conservation.

The five-member board of supervisors — three of whom are elected in the general election and two appointed by the Soil and Water Commission — are charged by North Carolina law with the responsibilities of promoting, planning and approving measures which will best conserve the natural resources of Macon County. In turn, the board of supervisors charges the three member staff, in partnership with Natural Resources Conservation Service, with implementing these measures.

The board of supervisors meets the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm (7:30 pm during daylight savings) in the District Office. All board meetings are open to the public; any changes to the schedule will be posted.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Macon Soil and Water Conservation District is to cooperatively assist in the development and implementation of conservation programs that promote and encourage the wise management and use of soil and water resources for rural, urban, and agricultural lands of Macon County.

District Supervisors

Melinda James, Chairman

Josh Ward, Member

James B. Roper, Secretary/Treasurer

Calvin Conley, Member

Pamela Bell, Vice Chair

District Staff

Mike Breedlove, NCACSP Technician

Doug Johnson, Streambank Technician

Millie Wells, Administrative Assistant

NRCS Staff

Kayla Hudson, District Conservationist

John Ottinger, Soil Conservationist

JULY 1, 2007-JUNE 30, 2008

NC Agriculture Cost Share Program

The North Carolina Agriculture Cost-Share Program has completed twenty years in Macon County. Mike Breedlove is the Natural Resource Conservation Technician for the program. Macon County was allocated \$71,426.00 for fiscal year 2007-2008 for use on conservation practices in the county. Over \$1,000,000.00 has been appropriated for work on Macon County projects under this program.

This program is based on conservation practices implementing water quality improvements. Cooperators are given cost-share assistance at the rate of 75% of the average cost of installing eligible conservation practices with emphasis on animal waste management to improve water quality.

A project for ten acres of cropland conversion to permanent vegetation is planned. We also are in the process of building two feed/waste structures for beef cattle. Plans for cattle exclusion from creeks along with animal watering systems are ongoing.

Also, this past year we completed work on Macon County's first Environmental Enhancement Program (EEP) project. We installed four separate livestock water tanks, sub-surface drainage and a grassed waterway on a local beef cattle farm. A sixty foot wide buffer will be established on Cat Creek in the Holly Springs section of the county at this particular farm.

Additionally, the North Carolina Drought Response Program will be implemented in Macon County. This is a temporary program intended to help local farmers who have suffered recently due to extended drought. Some of these practices include pasture renovation, wells for water supply and agricultural ponds. Macon County has received \$67,873 for this program with more allocations expected.

STREAMBANK RESTORATION/RIPARIAN REFORESTATION

The Macon Soil & Water Conservation District has, for over ten years, been actively promoting a streambank stabilization and riparian buffer restoration program in the Upper Little Tennessee River Watershed in Macon County. Doug Johnson coordinates the program as an employee of the Macon Soil and Water Conservation District.

Four grants, totaling over \$1.6 million from the EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund have been used to cost-share on implementation of streambank stabilization, riparian buffers, and, where necessary, fencing for livestock exclusion. The project uses environmentally sound and wildlife beneficial techniques, such as whole-tree revetments in order to reduce the amount of sediment entering the watershed. In addition the District, using a grant from North Carolina Division of Water Resources, completed its first project utilizing natural stream channel design techniques. This project was located on Burningtown Creek and consisted of installing two rock crossvanes, one rock J-hook structure and approximately two hundred feet of flood plain benching.

In FY 2008 using the latest CWMTF grant and the grant from NCDWR, ten projects, totaling approximately 2000 feet of streambank stabilization, seven acres of riparian buffer, and 5300 feet of fencing were completed.

USDA PROGRAMS

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

During FY-08, the staff completed annual site visit reviews for the completed projects.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The staff continued to emphasize the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. In FY-08, there were 7 applications and 5 contracts. One contract has been completed. Work is under-way on a second 08 contract, as well as, the 07 contract.

Grassland Reserve Program

The USDA Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) was used to fund one project in Macon County in 2005. That project is currently underway. Several Macon County farmers continue to express interest in this program and may sign up in FY-09, if the program is funded.

Farm and Ranchland Protection Program

The USDA Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) continues to be popular in Macon County. The Land Trust for the Little Tennessee does an excellent job of promoting this program. To date, four tracts of land in Macon County have been selected to receive FRPP funding. NRCS, working with the District, has the responsibility to develop conservation plans on farms in this program. In FY-08, a conservation plan was developed for the tract scheduled for closing in September, 2008.

Conservation Planning Assistance

During FY-08, conservation plans were developed for 581 acres. In addition to planning, the following practices were applied:

Mulching—2.5 Ac	Heavy Use Area Protection—0.2 Ac.
Nutrient Management —139 Ac.	Pipeline—382 Ft.
Field Border—2600 Ft.	Water Well—2
Watering Facility—7	

The above practices provide the following resource benefits:

Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality– 30 Ac.

Land with conservation applied to improve water quality– 172 Ac.

Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base– 168 Ac.

The installed practices or systems reduce erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. This was accomplished by NRCS and District staff working with landowners to implement conservation plans on private lands.

Beaver Management Program

The District has been the local contact agency for the Beaver Management Assistance Program, a cooperative effort between USDA Wildlife Services, NC Wildlife Resources Commission and the local district. Due to a lack of interest this program is no longer available.

SWNC RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

RC&D has been instrumental in helping to implement several programs and projects in Macon County. Some of the current projects include the very successful Streambank Stabilization Project and providing technical assistance to the Little Tennessee Watershed Association, the Upper Cullasaja Watershed Association and the Little Tennessee Non-point Source Team. RC&D also provided funding to the District for a streamtable.

Southwestern North Carolina RC&D Council members representing Macon County are James Roper, Mike Breedlove and Matt Mason. Matt is the County's sedimentation control officer. Doug Johnson also regularly attends the council meetings. Tim Garrett, whose office is located in Waynesville, is the council's project director.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

In September the District submitted an educational entry in the Macon County Fair. This year's theme was "'The Barn Door is Open' at the Macon County Fair."

In the fall each year the District participates in a Conservation Field Day for all seventh graders in the county. Three hundred twenty-five students participated this year.

During the early part of the year the Board of Supervisors sponsored a Poster Contest for grades three through six and an Essay Contest for six graders. This year's topic was "We All Live in a Watershed." Four hundred thirty-seven students attended the presentations and fifteen students were awarded monies this year. Additionally, one fourth grader won first place in the Area Poster Contest and then participated in the State Poster Contest.

The District participated in Soil Stewardship Week the week of April 27 through May 4. The theme for 2008 was "Water is Life." Materials were placed in six area churches and one restaurant.

The District sponsors the sale of trees and wildflower seeds each year for the public. Orders are taken in the fall for trees which arrive for planting in early spring. This year 1000 trees were sold. Wildflower seeds are kept in the office for sale all during the year.

The District was represented at most monthly RDP-FAC meetings with Kayla Hudson, Mike and Doug attending meetings for 2007-2008. Agencies included in this panel are: FSA, RDP, LBJ Job Corps, NC Forest Service, USFS, Coweeta Hydrological Lab, NC Cooperative Extension Service, Macon S&WCD, NRCS, and NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The Macon S&WCD in cooperation with this group has worked on several projects during the year. The District's close working relationship with these groups has enabled us to promote a variety of new and continuing programs and keep abreast of new activities and programs through other agricultural agencies.

In the spring of 2002 Macon County enacted a County Soil Sedimentation Control Ordinance. As part of this ordinance the District is required to review sedimentation plans and work closely with the Sedimentation Control Officer, Matt Mason. This year thirty-one plans have been reviewed and visits have been made to numerous sites.

District employees spoke about our programs and demonstrated the stream table at Cowee School reaching approximately 75 students.

In April Mike Breedlove spoke about our programs with twenty-three members at a Horse Club meeting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following agencies for their assistance and cooperation:

Rural Development Panel (RDP)

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

NC Cooperative Extension Service

NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources

NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Davis Ferguson, Regional Coordinator, Area 1 Soil & Water Conservation Districts

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

US Forest Service

Southwestern NC Resource Conservation & Development Council

Little Tennessee Watershed Association (LTWA)

Land Trust for the Little Tennessee

NC Forest Service

NC Wildlife Resource Commission

Macon County School Coordinator

Macon County Schools — Principals, Teachers

Devin Deal—Vo Ag Teacher Franklin High School and Chris Baldwin—Principal Nantahala High School

Macon County Commissioners, County Manager and Staff

The Franklin Press, Macon County News, The Highlander and Cashiers Chronicle

Local Radio Stations — WFSC/WWNC, WPFM and WHLC

Statement of Adoption

This Annual Report, as required by the state of North Carolina and requested in a supplemental memorandum of understanding with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, has been adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the Macon Soil and Water Conservation District on the ____day of _August_2008.

Melinda James, Chairman

Calvin Conley, Member

James Roper, Secretary/Treasurer

Josh Ward, Member

Pamela Bell, Member, Vice Chairman



Macon Soil & Water
Conservation District
191 Thomas Heights
Road
Franklin, NC 28734
828-524-3311