

ROLLING HILLS

RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC

*Serving the counties of
Bartow, Carroll, Coweta, Douglas, Floyd, Haralson, Heard, Paulding and Polk*

2008 Accomplishments



Helping Communities



Protecting and Enhancing Resources



Empowering Families



Supporting and Creating Businesses

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Protecting
* Preserving
* Empowering

2008 Annual Report

What is RC&D?

The RC&D program is a public/private partnership, initiated in 1962 to assist people in caring for and protecting their natural resources while improving an area's economy, environment and standard of living. The nonprofit effort, led by local government and community leaders, volunteers, and state and federal agencies, identifies and implements solutions to human, economic, and environmental concerns.

Rolling Hills RC&D Council was organized in 1994 and received full authorization in 1998. The Council serves citizens from a nine county region of northwest Georgia covering an area of over 2,000,000 acres. The program offers a unique vehicle for communities to plan for desired future conditions, develop strategies, secure necessary funding, and implement projects for local citizens.

2008 Accomplishments

- Council Member, Wendy Crager, was selected as *Outstanding Council Member* representing the Southeast. Wendy Crager was recognized at the Southeastern RC&D Conference in 2008 for her efforts and commitment.
- Rolling Hills also was selected to present a success story at the Southeastern RC&D Conference. The success story highlighted the efforts to train Certified Arborists that resulted in new jobs and expanded businesses in our area.
- Rolling Hills achieved their Circle of Diamonds designation by the National Association of RC&D Councils.
- Managed twelve no-till drills and one pasture aerator. Conservation Tillage Program planted 4960 acres, serving 242 landowners. This resulted in an estimated 19,840 tons of soil saved and 22,320 gallons of fuel saved.
- The Poultry Waste Management Program assisted 15 poultry businesses and addressed nutrient management on 2600 acres.
- Wheels to Work assisted 22 clients including 10 new clients with vehicles to work. Four jobs were created and sixteen individuals were able to maintain their jobs as a result. Two clients paid their loans off. An estimated eighty immediate family members benefited from this program.
- A contract was signed with the Environmental Protection Division for \$915,000 to begin a watershed project on the Lower Little Tallapoosa Watershed in January 2009.
- A contract was signed with the Environmental Protection Division for \$655,500 to begin a watershed project on the Big Cedar Creek Watershed in January 2009.
- Rolling Hills continued to provide Erosion and Sediment Control Certification training courses.
- Rolling Hills assisted three communities with tree inventories of public trees. A total of 1959 trees were inventoried and assessed.
- Five Arbor Day events were held and thirteen trees were planted in parks and public spaces.
- Twenty five individuals were trained on Arborist practices.
- A Certified Arborist publication was developed to promote local Certified Arborist businesses in the region. 1000 copies were printed and distributed.
- Two Sustainable Growers School course series were held, training 29 new farming enterprises on sustainable farming.
- A Master Equine Course was held, training fifty five horse owners on land management and animal husbandry topics.
- Rolling Hills supported the Georgia Envirothon, allowing 72 students the opportunity to learn and compete on natural resources.
- A contract was signed with the GA RC&D Council to carry out an energy audit program for poultry farms in 2009-2010.
- Assisted with various field days, conferences, and outreach events, reaching hundreds of individuals about conservation and land preservation.

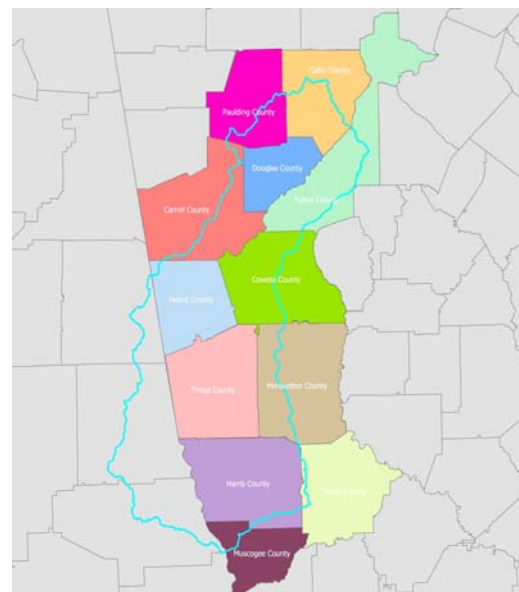
Upper Middle Chattahoochee Watershed/Poultry Waste Management-319 Watershed Project



Rolling Hills has received funding through the *GA Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD)*, section 319(h) funds totaling \$1,053,914 to implement water quality BMPs in the Upper Middle Chattahoochee Watershed. This project has been in operation since 2004. The project provides cost share funding to poultry

producers within the watershed to install dry litter stackhouses, compost sheds and rotary composters.

Technical assistance is provided through Project Manager, Susan Pullen, to participating landowners. In 2008, fifteen businesses were assisted and over 2600 acres were treated through this project. This project operates in partnership with *NRCS* and *Carroll County Cooperative Extension*.



Wheels to Work

The Wheels to Work program is a service designed to assist low income families with transportation to work. Rolling Hills provides a no-interest, minimal payment loan to selected individuals for the purpose of obtaining or maintaining employment. This program has been in operation since 1999 in the Rolling Hills region, assisting over 160 families.



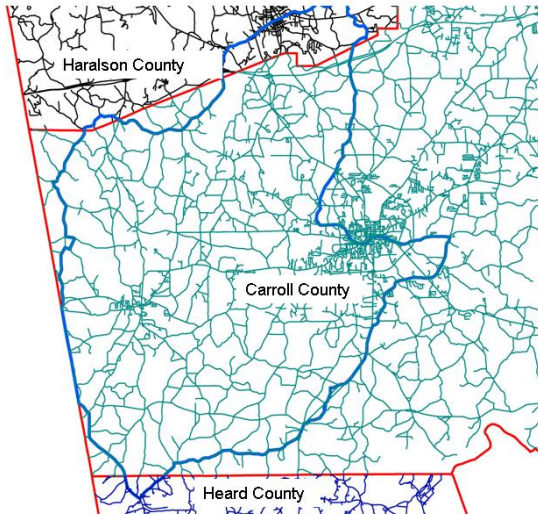
Throughout 2008, Wheels to Work exceeded our goal by placing ten clients in vehicles in Carroll, Douglas, Paulding and Polk Counties. A total of 22 clients were served. Four jobs were created and sixteen individuals were able to maintain their jobs. Two clients were able to pay their loans off in full. Including clients, a total of eighty immediate family members have benefited from Wheels to Work in 2008.

In 2008, Rolling Hills received funding from the *Carroll County EMC Operation Roundup* program for \$4500 and a grant in the amount of \$12,500 from the *Community Foundation of West Georgia*. These funds have and will continue to assist this program reach out to families, create and maintain jobs, and get individuals off of public assistance and back to work.

Lower Little Tallapoosa Watershed

In 2008, Rolling Hills RC&D entered into an agreement with the *Environmental Protection Division* for \$915,000 to implement a TMDL Implementation Plan for the Lower Little Tallapoosa watershed.

Lower Little Tallapoosa Watershed Map

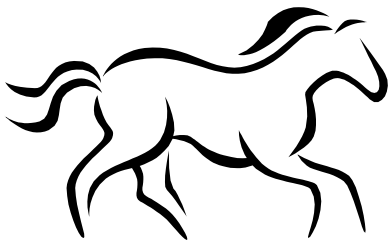


This project will address water quality issues, such as fecal coliform and sediment by providing cost share funding to agricultural and non-agricultural landowners to implement water quality practices within the watershed. Practices will include livestock exclusion from riparian areas, heavy use areas, pasture planting, and animal waste management. In addition, non-agricultural practices will be funded—specifically corrective actions on failing septic systems.

This project will be a collaboration between the RC&D, *Carroll County*, *Carroll County Environmental Health*, *Haralson County Environmental Health*, *Heard County Environmental Health*, *Cooperative Extension*, *NRCS*, *West Georgia University*, and others. The project is scheduled to begin in January 2009.

Outreach and Education

Georgia requires all individuals and businesses involved in land disturbance to have a certification in Erosion and Sediment Control. Since 2005, Rolling Hills has served as a trainer, providing this needed training to over 1200 individuals. The Council offers this service locally through our member counties. During 2008, Rolling Hills continued this service. This program ensures job retention and expanded business by providing the required certification.



Rolling Hills RC&D partnered with *Cooperative Extension Offices* to provide a *Master Equine Management Course* to horse owners and landowners. Fifty five individuals attended the five night course to learn about animal husbandry and land management issues related to horse owners.

Rolling Hills RC&D supports the establishment of native grasses in our region for wildlife management. In 2007, the Council purchased a native grass planter to assist landowners with this issue. In the spring of 2008, a native grass field day was sponsored in partnership with the *Georgia Department of Natural Resources* to highlight the use of native grasses in wildlife management and to discuss related *Farm Bill* opportunities.



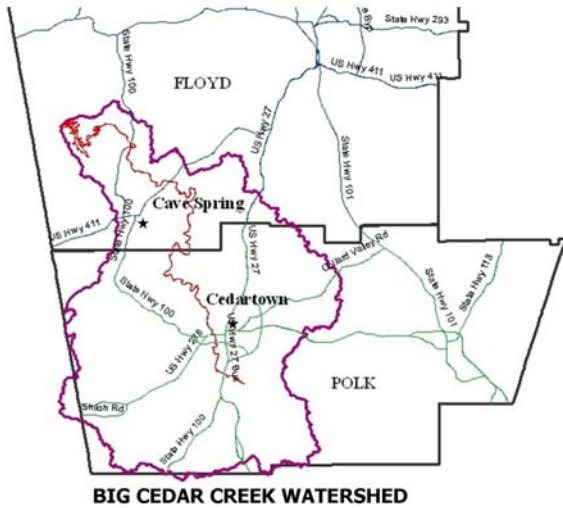
Big Cedar Creek Watershed

In 2008, Rolling Hills RC&D entered into a contract for \$655,500 with the *Environmental Protection Division* to implement a TMDL Implementation Plan for the Big Cedar Creek watershed.

The Big Cedar Creek watershed encompasses 133,205 acres in Polk and Floyd Counties. A total of 25 miles of stream segments within this watershed are listed as impaired.

The project, scheduled to begin January 2009, will provide funding to install practices on private lands to address sources of fecal coliform and sediment impairments. Practices will include septic corrective practices and agricultural best management practices (BMPs).

This project will be a collaboration between the RC&D, *NRCS*, *Cooperative Extension*, *Polk County Environmental Health*, *Floyd County Environmental Health*, and others.



Urban Forestry and Community Landscape Assistance

In 2008, Rolling Hills RC&D provided technical assistance to several communities in the region to complete tree inventories through a contract with the *Georgia Forestry Commission*. This project was funded by an Urban and Community Forestry grant for \$24,900. Ginger Watson, Council Arborist, inventoried parks and public areas in Dallas, Cedartown, and Rockmart to identify and GPS public trees and document health and maintenance issues. The inventory was completed using I-Tree software. Management plans were also completed to be provided to the cities with recommendations for short and long term care.



Five Arbor Day events were held in the participating communities. In addition, thirteen trees were planted in parks during these events.

A Certified Arborist Training course took place in Dallas.

Twenty five individuals (25) involved with critical decisions affecting tree resources were trained. This results in expanded businesses and job retention.



Community Food Project/Farmers Fresh Food Network

Rolling Hills continues to assist local farmers through the support of a locally grown cooperative, the *Farmers Fresh Food Network*. This cooperative works with a network of farmers to provide local, healthy, fresh food to consumers in the region.

Farmers Fresh continued their popular Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in 2008. The Cooperative collects fresh produce from its member farmers and distributes it by a subscription program to individuals in the region through weekly deliveries.



Buying locally ensures the consumer of fresh, healthy food. It hasn't traveled thousands of miles to reach their tables, plus the consumer is receiving produce that is either Certified Organic or Certified Naturally Grown. An additional benefit is the purchaser can get to know the farmers personally and support the local economy by buying from their neighbors!

Sustainable Growers School



Through local food efforts and supporting sustainable agriculture initiatives, it was discovered that the demand for locally grown food products far exceeded the supply!

With funding from *NRCS*, Rolling Hills partnered with *NRCS* and the *Carroll County Cooperative Extension* to develop a new class series designed to teach the

new and emerging small farmer and to teach sustainable agriculture techniques to existing growers wishing to transition from their current farming practices.

The *Sustainable Growers School* was developed with the guidance of local farmers, under the direction of *Mike Gilroy*, Project Director. The class teaches soils, integrated

pest management, water use, tractor and equipment, greenhouses, small farm vegetables, sustainable livestock, farm management, and marketing.

Two courses were held in 2008—with each course consisting of several one day classes. These courses are instrumental in creating new farm businesses and teaching sustainable farming practices to create more direct marketing opportunities in our communities. A pilot "short course" was held in Bartow County with the partnership of Chaz Holt of *Holt Heritage Farm* with seventeen individuals attending.



Georgia Envirothon



The *Georgia Envirothon* is a hands-on competition for high school students on environmental study materials. Teams from around Georgia compete on soils, water quality, forestry, wildlife, and a current issue. Through a regional competition, the best teams are selected to move on to a state level competition which then sends a top team to the *International Canon Envirothon*.

Rolling Hills continues to support the Georgia Envirothon by coordinating and sponsoring the West Region Competition. The competition is held at the *Clayton County Water Authority, Newman Wetlands Center* annually.



No-Till Assistance

The No-till assistance program continues to provide valuable services to the region. The Council supports twelve no-till drills for the purpose of promoting wise land use management and supporting local farming operations. The drills plant seed while leaving the soil and crop residues undisturbed, resulting in saving soil, improving water quality, and improving soil fertility. The No-till program also saves energy by requiring less trips across a field in comparison to traditional methods.

A total of 4960 acres were planted in 2008, serving 242 landowners. This resulted in an estimated 19,840 tons of soil saved and an estimated 22,320 gallons of fuel saved.

No-Till Custodians and Operators

<u>County</u>	<u>Custodian</u>
Floyd	Jarrell Cagle
Polk	Earley Vinson
Carroll	Georgia Deer Farm/Roger Herrod
Paulding	Elrod Garden Center/Sam Elrod
Coweta	Mac's Feed & Farm Supply/Frank Sullivan
Bartow	Taylor Farm Supply/Steve Taylor



Energy Conservation

In 2008, the *Georgia RC&D Council* received approval for a Conservation Innovation Grant from the *Natural Resources Conservation Service*. Through the grant, Rolling Hills RC&D will be partnering with *Seven Rivers RC&D Council*, *NRCS*, and the *University of Georgia* for the next two years to create a farm energy audit program for poultry operations. This initial funding will fund three demonstration projects in each RC&D region.

The projects will provide energy audits on poultry broiler operations and funding to assist with implementation of components of the audit results.

The goal of this project is to develop a reliable system for providing energy audits to farms in the years ahead and create partnerships to assist landowners with energy conservation efforts on their farms.

This project will begin in January of 2009.

Empowering communities to enhance the quality of life in rural areas, care for people, and protect natural resources.

2008 Rolling Hills Membership

Bartow County
Clarence Brown
Davis Nelson

Douglas County
David Lathem
Carolyn Westbrook

Heard County
Denney Rogers
Doug Craven

Coosa River SWCD
VACANT

Carroll County
Bill Chappell
Wendy Crager

Floyd County
Eddie Lumsden
Thad Rush

Paulding County
Bruce Coyle
Charles Rutland

West GA SWCD
Claude Abercrombie

Coweta County
Sandra Parker
Jim McGuffey

Haralson County
Allen Poole
Keith Golden

Polk County
Frank Lott
Jewell Tuck

Coosa Valley RDC
David Howerin

At Large Member
Johnny Groover

Chatt-Flint RDC
Kimberly Dutton



Executive Board Members

President	Johnny Groover
Vice President	Claude Abercrombie
Secretary	Jewell Tuck
Treasurer	Wendy Crager
Past President	Charles Rutland

Council Staff

Cindy Haygood	NRCS RC&D Coordinator
Kevin Patterson	Wheels to Work Project Administrator
Susan Pullen	Poultry Waste Management Project Manager
Ginger Watson	Certified Arborist/Community Forester

For more information, please contact us:

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