

Highlights from the Hills

A Newsletter of the
Rolling Hills Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc



Issue 19, Summer 2009

Rolling Hills Council Member Receives National Recognition!

Congratulations to **Wendy Crager**, Rolling Hills RC&D Council Member, who recently received national recognition for exceptional leadership in community service. Wendy was awarded the **National Outstanding Council Member for 2009** from the National Association of RC&D Councils. She received her award in Albuquerque, New Mexico in June at the national conference which was attended by over 800 individuals from across the United States.

Wendy has served on the Rolling Hills RC&D since 1994. Her participation and initiative have greatly benefited the Rolling Hills' region. She has written and managed grants and carried out projects to address composting, recycling, local park improvements, and land preservation. The projects she is proudest of are the Council's locally grown initiatives. Her leadership led to the beginning of the Cotton Mill Farmers Market as well as the Farmers Fresh Food Network. These initiatives have helped to support local family farm businesses and to bring fresh, locally grown food to local citizens. She has also made presentations to other RC&D Councils in Georgia to share experiences about locally grown food projects.

Wendy Crager and her husband Bryan own and operate Crager Hager Farm and sell a variety of produce through farmers markets and off the farm. Congratulations Wendy!



L-R Olga Walter, Joan Smith Freeman, Wendy Crager and Howard Coffield.

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New Council Members

Rolling Hills would like to welcome our two newest Council Members! Larry Reynolds and Irwin Bagwell will be working with us to serve our nine county region.

Larry Reynolds is a Rockmart native and a veteran of the U.S. Navy. He is a twenty four year member of the Rockmart Lions Club, twice past president, and the current club Secretary. Larry retired from the Ford Motor Company after 31 years and now serves Polk County on the *Board of Commissioners* (District 3).

Irwin Bagwell is a life-long resident of Floyd County and a graduate of the University of Georgia. Irwin is a fifth generation farmer. He and his brother specialize in row crop production on their Vanns Valley Farms. Irwin is a member of the Georgia Agribusiness Council and has served on the FSA County Committee. He has also served on the Floyd County Planning Commission and chaired the Rome/Floyd Comprehensive Plan Update. He now serves Floyd County on the *Board of Commissioners*.

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WATERSHED PROJECT UPDATES– SEPTIC PROJECT

by Susan Pullen, Watershed Program Manager

Through both the Lower Little Tallapoosa and Big Cedar Creek Watershed Projects, Rolling Hills RC&D is working with landowners to improve water quality by correcting septic tank problems. Landowners in these watersheds with failing septic tanks qualify for cost share to repair or replace their tanks based upon technical guidance from local Environmental Health Departments. Since the projects began in March 2009, twenty-seven septic tanks have either been repaired or replaced with an additional seven under contract. These landowners had been experiencing problems such as sewage on top of the ground prior to the work being completed. Many of these landowners have been waiting to do the repair work due to the cost involved. One hundred landowners have been assisted with pumping their septic tanks.

We are also implementing a program to educate the public about septic tank maintenance. Landowners in the Big Cedar Creek Watershed are encouraged to attend a *Septic Tank Maintenance Workshop* to learn more about proper maintenance. These workshops will be held periodically through the year and will be required in the future for anyone wishing to get assistance with pumping their septic tanks. Attendees will receive (if needed) a voucher towards pumping out their septic tank after attending the workshop.

The first *Septic Tank Maintenance Workshop* is scheduled for Monday, August 17th at 6:00 pm at Georgia Northwestern Technical College. Landowners to RSVP to attend. For more information or to RSVP, contact the Council office or Susan Pullen.

This project is funded through the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's 319h program.



On ground sewage resulting from failed septic tank.

CERTIFIED ARBORIST COURSE

by John Hendrickson, Council Arborist

The Certified Arborist Training Classes, held in Cartersville this spring, were well attended by a cross section of enthusiastic students representing both private industry and several government affiliations. A few ISA Certified Arborists were also on hand for a review and to obtain CEUs required by The International Society of Arboriculture to maintain their certification.

Affiliation	Total Attendees	ISA Arborists
County Govt.	3	
UGA Extension	1	
Forestry Consulting	1	
Municipality	8	3
Utility	1	1
Commercial Tree Care	5	
Total	19	4

Over the five class sessions, 15 topics were covered ranging from the fundamentals of tree biology and identification, to the arboricultural arts of pruning and tree climbing & rigging. The training was designed to help students prepare for ISA testing and Arborist Certification. Testing was administered in Rome last month. The results are expected shortly, and we hope to add several of our students to the ranks of ISA Certified Arborists!

This course was partially funded through a grant from the *Georgia Forestry Commission's Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program*.



ENERGY AUDITS

by Kevin Patterson, Program Administrator



Three broiler poultry farms belonging to Dennis Fulton, David Huddleston and Tim Iverson were selected in Carroll County by Dr. John Worley from the University of Georgia to participate in a NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) grant. Each farm was visited by Dr. Worley, Marshall Cauthen (Carroll EMC), and Rolling Hills' staff to obtain information about each farm and determine needed energy saving practices. Based upon information obtained from the site visit and other information,

bids have been received from each farm and an Energy Audit identifying needed energy practices and estimated energy savings has been completed by Dr. Worley.

Rolling Hills will be partnering with these producers to install the recommended energy saving practices over the next few months. Our hope is to have all work completed on the farms by the middle of November 2009. This would allow this winter's gas and electricity usage to be compared to last year's usage in order to determine the amount of electricity and propane saved. We anticipate the farmers will recognize a substantial savings in energy which should result in better profits.

Rolling Hills is partnering with UGA, NRCS, Seven Rivers RC&D and the GA RC&D Council to carry out this project. Plans are to extend the service if funds allow.

This project is funded through a USDA, NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant.



COUNCIL RETREAT UPDATE—VISION 2020

BY Cindy Haygood, RC&D Coordinator

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Council's Planning Retreat at Carroll EMC on June 4th!

We had 24 participants, including Council members and partners, representing a cross section of interests. Georgia EMC meeting facilitator, Niki Knox, did an impressive job moving us along through discussions about goals and visions for Rolling Hills for our "vision 2020".

Concepts prioritized during the meeting included:

- Expanding our current sustainable agriculture efforts
- Develop and implement a marketing plan for the RC&D programs
- Expanding and recruit new board members – including youth membership
- Updating and revising mission statement to a "memorable" statement
- Council sustainability

A list of recommendations for our next steps have been developed. These topics and others will be discussed more thoroughly at the next quarterly Council meeting on September 10th. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact the Council Office.



ROLLING HILLS MEMBERSHIP

Bartow County

Clarence Brown
Davis Nelson

Carroll County

Bill Chappell
Wendy Crager, Treasurer

Coweta County

Sandra Parker
Jim McGuffey

Coosa River SWCD

VACANT

At Large Member

Johnny Groover, President

Douglas County

David Lathem
Carolyn Westbrook

Floyd County

Irwin Bagwell
Thad Rush

Haralson County

Allen Poole
Keith Golden

West GA SWCD

Claude Abercrombie, Vice Pres.

Chatt-Flint RDC

Kimberly Dutton

Heard County

Denney Rogers
Doug Craven

Paulding County

Bruce Coyle
Charles Rutland, Past Pres.

Polk County

Larry Reynolds
Jewell Tuck, Secretary

Coosa Valley RDC

David Howerin



UPCOMING EVENTS!

BIG CEDAR CREEK WATERSHED- LANDOWNER TRAINING FOR SEPTIC TANK MAINTENANCE
Monday, August 17, 2009
6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Georgia Northwestern Technical College (formerly Coosa Valley Tech)
Rome, GA

TREE PLANTING AND ESTABLISHMENT WORKSHOP*
Tuesday, August 25, 2009
6:00 p.m. (free of charge)
Floyd County Extension Office

TREE SELECTION CLASS*
Tuesday, September 8, 2009
6:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m.
Coweta County Extension Office

ROLLING HILLS THIRD QUARTER MEETING
Thursday, September 10, 2009
9:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.
Polk County EMA- Cedartown, GA

AGROFORESTRY/WILDLIFE FIELD DAY
Thursday, September 17, 2009
Griffin Experiment Station
for more information- www.caes.uga.edu/events/awfdog/

TREE PLANTING CLASS*
Thursday, September 24, 2009
10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
Paulding County Library

GEORGIA RC&D COUNCIL MEETING
October 22-23, 2009
Columbus, GA

*Instructor: John Hendrickson

ATTENTION!

In order to more effectively watch our budget, we will be offering the Council newsletter electronically to individuals that make that request. If you would like to receive your copy of the Rolling Hills RC&D newsletter Highlights from the Hills electronically, please let us know at admin@rollinghillsrkd.org or call the Council office at 770-749-0444 and leave us your e-mail address.

Also, if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know also. You may also e-mail us at admin@rollinghillsrkd.org.

COUNCIL STAFF

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