

## **Soil and Water Gazette**

### **Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District**

**Fall 2022**

#### **A Brief History of the District**

The **Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District (MRSWCD)** was chartered by the State of Florida on April 5, 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 6:00 pm at the Manatee Extension Office in Palmetto.

#### **Board Members**

Paul Howard	Chairman
John J. O'Connor, Jr.	Vice-Chairman
Julie Tillett	Treasurer
Callon C. (Buddy) Keen, Jr.	Supervisor
Ben King	Supervisor

#### **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).**

USDA program applications are accepted on a continuous basis. **For more information or to receive an application contact the local NRCS office at (941)907-0011 or visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/florida>**

##### **Hurricane Ian EQIP Emergency Assistance**

USDA NRCS can provide payments, through conservation program contracts, for **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** conservation practices to help agricultural landowners and producers address disaster related resource concerns on their land in 27 impacted counties.

Agricultural producers and landowners interested in submitting an EQIP application can call our office at 941-907-0011. Practices include high tunnel system, cleaning and snagging, conservation cover, cover crop, critical area planting, emergency animal mortality management, fence, woody residue treatment, mulching, obstruction removal, and pest management conservation system.

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**OFFICE STAFF:**

Israel Vega-Marrero	District Conservationist
Jeremy Ansel	Soil Conservation Technician
Sean Gray	Soil Conservation Planner
Gail Somodi	Soil Conservation Supervisor
Vanessa Taylor	Administrative Specialist II

An Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer, and Lender.

**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 3142. Any donations would be greatly appreciated.*

**Speech Competition**

Two participants prepared a 5-7 minute speech on the topic selected by the Association of Florida Conservation Districts, "Healthy Soil: Healthy Life" Hayden Stolze, a Palmetto High School student, won the competition and was awarded a check for \$150. Placing second and awarded \$100 was Sophia Gagliano, a Haile Middle School student. Stolze qualified for the area contest, but was not available to attend.

**Staff assisted 2 participants with the help of 3 volunteers.**

**Manasota Regional Envirothon**

Manatee High School's L-g team advised by Boontarika Elswick was the Manatee County winner of the Manasota Regional Envirothon held at Oscar Scherer State Park. The team represented Manatee County at the state contest on the east coast. The Florida Envirothon competition is an 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 133 students with the help of 17 volunteers.**



**Manatee County Land Judging Competition**

The 60<sup>th</sup> annual 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. Lakewood Ranch High School won the senior FFA team division and the junior FFA winning team was from Buffalo Creek Middle School. Intermediate and senior 4-H teams also competed. The overall highest scoring team was from Lakewood Ranch High School. Several top teams qualified and attended the state contest in late March in Alachua County. The Lakewood Ranch High School FFA team placed 7<sup>th</sup> in their division. The senior 4-H team and an intermediate 4-H individual placed 1<sup>st</sup> in their divisions at the state contest, as did Buffalo Creek Middle School FFA.

**Staff assisted 31 students with the help of 7 volunteers.**

**Manatee Spring Conservation Farm Tour**

In the spring the MRSWCD sponsors a Farm Tour showcasing various farming areas in the county. We take citizens on a guided bus tour to highlight the importance of agriculture to our area. Lunch and snacks are included. **For more information on attending in spring 2023 please call 941-907-0011 x 3142.** If you would like your farm/agricultural operation to be considered as a stop on the tour please call us. In spring 2022, over 80 attendees visited Jones Potato Farm, Taylor Cattle and Citrus, Blackbeard's Ranch, and Watercress Farms.

## 2023 Manatee River SWCD Spring Events

Envirothon	February
Land Judging	February
Spring Farm Tour	March

Contact us for dates.



United States Department of Agriculture

### Natural Resources Conservation Service Corner

**Conservation Stewardship Program.** This program is a great way for producers to maintain and improve their existing conservation systems as well as adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. CSP addresses resource concerns such as soil, water, air quality, and plant/animal resources. The program will pay participants based on their level of conservation performance in an annual payment for a five year contract period. Eligible applicants must meet the stewardship threshold for at least two priority resource concerns at the application phase, they must be in control of the land with which they are applying, and agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one priority resource concern by the end of the contract. Cropland, pastureland, and forestland are some examples of qualifying land types. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/csp-conservation-stewardship-program>

### 2022 Conservation Applied (Oct 1, 2021-Sep 30, 2022)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other programs – 498 acres  
Planned practices in FY2022 – 2,310 acres  
Active contracts – 15 = 4,992 in conservation (EQIP and CSP only) acres  
Conservation plans written – 3,601 acres

### Services Provided

**Natural Resource Information.** NRCS access to recent and historical aerial photographs, 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/> Please contact us if you would like assistance.

**Develop Conservation Plans** on land used for agriculture. The plans recommend Best Management Practices for protecting resources.

### Available Programs

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and others. Call for information 941-907-0011.

**Manatee River Soil and  
Water Conservation District**

1303 17<sup>th</sup> St. W.  
Palmetto, FL 34221

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

Soils Unit/Extension website  
<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/manatee/agriculture/soils-unit/>  
MRSWCD website  
<http://www.manateeriverswcd.com>

**Farm City Week**

**For more information contact**

**Lisa Hickey- Interim County Extension Director at 941-722-4524**

- Nov 7** MRSWCD Speech Contest: “One Water” Celebrating our watersheds. Pre-registration required.
- Nov 9** Hall of Fame Luncheon
- Nov 10** Farm Tour
- Nov 15** Kiwanis Agriculturalist of the Year
- Nov 17** AgVenture
- Nov 19** Beef Workshop and Prospect Show

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. The focus this year will be on nutrition. 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 Kirby 722-4524 ext.1824 or visit <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/manatee/agriculture/livestock--forage-crops/>