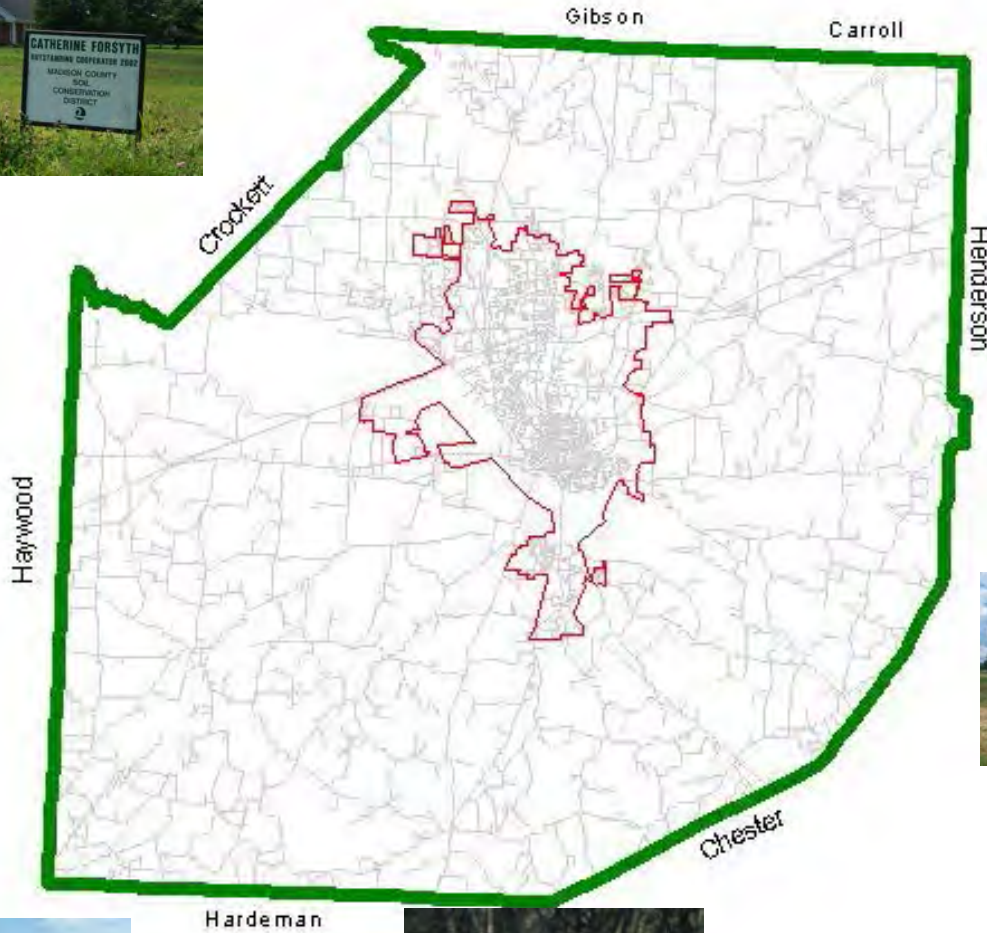




Annual Report 2003



Serving to Conserve Madison County's Natural Resources Since 1941

**MADISON COUNTY
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2003**

Presented by the board of supervisors of the Madison County Soil Conservation District
to inform district cooperators and the public about the District's activities.

INTRODUCTION - The District is a corporate and political subdivision of the state, established by the state soil conservation committee in 1941. The geographic and political boundaries of the District are the same as those of Madison County. The District is a member of the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD), and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS - A board of supervisors, responsible for developing and administering the District's long range program governs the District. The board is composed of five landowners residing within the District. Two of the supervisors are appointed to serve three year terms by the state soil conservation committee, while three of the supervisors are elected to serve three years by the land owners within the District. The supervisors meet monthly and do not receive a salary. The present board consists of Allen Verell, Mike Pearson, Joel Haynes, Bob Bryant, and Don Johnson.

Chairman, Allen Verell, of the Huntersville Community was elected to the board in 1995, elected to a second term in 1998, and a third term in 2001. Allen had previously served as Vice-Chairman. In 2003 Allen was elected by the Board as the Board Chairman. Allen was elected in 2003 to serve as Director of TACD for Area VIII. Allen is a full time farmer and is a past recipient of the District Conservation Farmer Award. Allen also serves on the Madison's Farmers Co-op Board.



*Madison County Soil Conservation District Board
2003: Left to Right: Joel Haynes, Secretary-
Treasurer; Bob Bryant; Allen Verell, Chairman;
Don Johnson; Mike Pearson, Vice Chairman*

Vice-Chairman, Mike Pearson of the Adair Community was elected to the board in 1995, elected to a second term in 1998, and a third term in 2001. Mike had served previously as secretary-treasurer. In 2003 Mike was elected by the board to replace Allen as the Board's Vice-Chairman. Mike is a full time farmer. Mike also serves as a county committeeman for FSA and is on the Co-op Board.

Secretary-Treasurer, Joel Haynes, of the Huntersville Community, was appointed to the board in 1999 by the state soil conservation committee, and reappointed to a second term this year. In 2003 Joel was reelected by the Board to serve another term as the Board's Secretary-Treasurer. Joel is a full time

farmer, as well as a partner in a construction company. Joel is a past recipient of the District Conservation Farmer Award and TACD Category I winner. Joel also serves on the Co-op Board.

Bob Bryant, of the Beech Bluff Community was elected to the board in 2001. Bob is an avid sportsman. He has held leadership positions in the

conservation of our natural resources at the local, state, and national levels. Bob's passion for the outdoors and his concerns for wildlife led him to found the local, "Forked Deer", chapter of Quail Unlimited, of which Bob serves as its President. Bob is also a former chairman of the Tennessee Council of Quail Unlimited and is currently on the Quail Unlimited National Board of Trustees.

Don Johnson, of the Denmark Community is the Board's newest member, having been appointed to the Board this spring by the state soil conservation committee. Don is a full time farmer and cotton ginner. Don is a past recipient of the District's Conservation Farmer Award and TACD Category I winner. Don also serves on the Co-op Board. Don is a second generation SCD Board member.

OFFICE STAFF

Technically the District does not have any employees. However, there were 4 employees working out of the office in 2003, which we claim as our own. They were:

Federal Employees



Brad Denton, District Conservationist

Brad is a District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and has been stationed with the District since 1986.



Kenneth Williams, Conservationist

Kenneth is a Soil Conservationist for NRCS and has been stationed in Madison County since January of 1997.

County Employees



Maxine Blankenship, Secretary/Clerk

Maxine has been a secretary-clerk for Madison County since 1969.



Benton James, Engineering Tech./Conservationist

Benton has been an engineering tech. /soil conservationist for the County since 1979.

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET- (March)

The District held its annual awards banquet in March, at the Madison County Agricultural Complex Auditorium.

Everyone enjoyed a steak dinner catered by Richard's of Bolivar.

Tim Shape, Agriculture Professor, Jackson State Community College was our guest speaker. Tim talked about the work he his staff and students are during in the high tech, highly specialized field of variable rate precision agriculture. Jackson State is one of the top five schools in the U.S. in this field.

Former board member Franklin James was recognized for his distinguish service to the District since 1972.

Catherine Forsyth was recognized as the District's Cooperator of 2002. Among Ms Forsyth's list of conservation work was the installation of 5 grade stabilization structures along the banks of Turkey Creek, a 303d stream.



*Tim Sharp, Ag Instructor at JSCC
Discussed Precision Farming*



*Catherine Forsyth accepts Outstanding
Cooperator Award from District
Chairman, Allen Verell*



Brad Compliments Ms. Forsyth on her Good Work



Ms Forsyth and Proud Family

TACD WEST TENNESSEE WINTER MEETING-*(January)* District Supervisor elected as TACD director- During the West Tennessee TACD meeting, Allen Verell, Madison County SCD District Supervisor, was elected to serve as Director of TACD for Area VIII.

TACD SUMMER MEETING- *(August)* District Cooperator Recognized by TACD as Outstanding 2002 District Cooperator of West Tennessee- Catherine Forsyth, the District's 2002 Outstanding Cooperator was recognized as the West Tennessee Outstanding Cooperator of the year by the West Tennessee Region of the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD) at their summer meeting.



Ms Forsyth, after accepting the award, addressed those attending the West Tennessee TACD Summer Meeting.

SOIL STEWARDSHIP SERVICES *-(April)* In April the District supplied St. John's Baptist Church Number 2, Denmark Baptist Church, Forest Heights Methodist Church, and Greater Mercer Baptist Church, with soil stewardship material for worship services during Soil and Water Stewardship Week.

SCD Officer Election

In the spring our board elected new officers for the year. Longtime supervisor Franklin James retired after 31 years of service. The state soil conservation committee appointed Don Johnson to fill the vacant position. The Board then elected Allen Verell to succeed Franklin as our Chairman. Franklin had served in that position since 1975. Mike Pearson was elected Vice-Chairman, and Joel Haynes was reelected as Secretary-Treasurer.

MADISON COUNTY COURT HONORS RETIRING DISTRICT SUPERVISOR



Supervisors Allen Verell and Joel Haynes stand along side of retired supervisor Franklin James

In the spring, Franklin James, retired Madison County SCS Supervisor, was honored by the Madison County Court for his many years of service to the county as a conservation leader. Franklin had served on our board since 1972 and had served as our Chairman since 1975. As supervisor he had also served as director of Area VIII for TACD. Franklin also served on the Obion-Forked Deer River Basin Board. Franklin's leadership will be missed.

ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR – *(May)* In May, the District staff took part in the Environmental Fair attended by 1,200 fifth grade students from 19 schools in Madison County. Handouts prepared by the office staff were given to the students visiting our booth, while they viewed a Power Point slide presentation prepared by our staff.



Over 1,200 5th graders attended the Environmental Fair

TDA AG BMP GRANT – The district provided 11 cooperators with over \$10,000 in cost-share assistance to apply best management practices on their land. The funds were provided through grants from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA). Participants received up to 75% cost-share to install Best Management Practices (BMPs) on their land. BMPs are conservation practices recognized for improving water quality in Tennessee’s rivers and streams.



Among other practices seven Grade control were installed through TDA grant funding, 2 along the banks of Turkey Ck, a 303d stream

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP) –

EQIP is a USDA program which provides agricultural landowners and operators with technical assistance and up to 75% cost-share in the installation of conservation practices. We had 1 cooperator accepted into the program in 2003 with a contract of \$15,000. Practices were performed in 2003 on three prior years’ contracts.



Nearly 80 acres of row crops were converted to grassland through EQIP contracts

NO-TILL DRILLS - The District has a 7-foot no-till Tye drill and a 9-foot no-till Haybuster drill for rent by people in and around Madison County. The drills are housed by, and can be rented through the Madison County Farmers Co-op. The drills were obtained through a grant from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA).



7-foot Tye Pasture Pleaser no-till drill

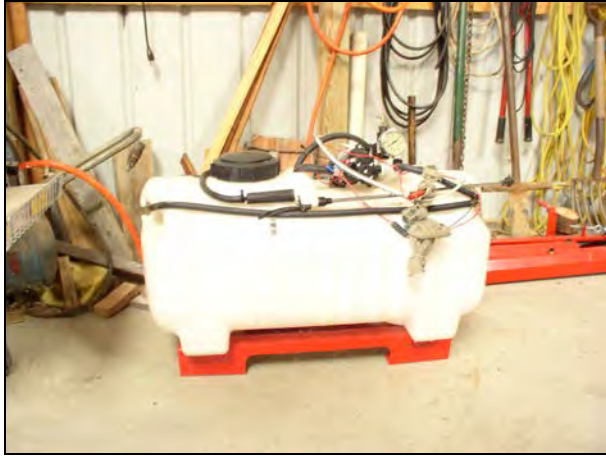


9-foot Haybuster no-till drill capable of planting legumes, grasses, and Native Grasses

STRAW MULCHING MACHINE - The Chickasaw-Shiloh RC&D Council has the straw mulcher pictured below available for rent through the District, (\$50 per 1/2 day, \$80 per day). The Blower is housed at Bemis Gin.



SPRAY RIG – The District has the below pictured spry rig for rent (\$15/day). It is designed to fit on a 4 wheeler or the back of a truck. It has a 25 gal. tank, electric pump, and a 10’ spray boom.



Provided by a grant from RC&D

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM(WRP)

– The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) is a federal program where the government purchases permanent or temporary easements on lands that would have been considered wetlands before they were cleared. The land is restored to its natural hydrology and planted to bottomland hardwood trees. District cooperators had two WRP contracts totaling 287 acres finalized for entry by USDA in 2003. These contracts totaled \$181,000. This, added to the 3 contracts consisting of 145 acres already in WRP, brings a total of 5 contracts totally 432 acres in WRP within the District.



Shallow use water area a component of one of the 5 restored wetland contracts in Madison Co.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

(CRP) – CRP contracts are agreements between landowners and the federal government, where the landowner agrees to establish and maintain their environmentally sensitive land in a vegetative cover which protects the soil from erosion and benefits wildlife. In return, the government partially reimburses the individual's establishment costs and pays the landowner an annual rent. The District was very active the last few years to get CRP soil rental rates increased for Madison County landowners. Finally in September of 2002 we received notice that our efforts had paid off. After a number of letters to Congressman Tanner and FSA, a petition drive, and two well-prepared reports documenting the disparity, Madison County's rates were increased significantly. During the 2003 regular sign-up 3,930 acres on 101 farms in Madison County were accepted into CRP. The owners will receive annual rental of \$339,000. This is nearly \$120,000 more per year they will receive than what they would have received under the old rates!

Soil Symbol	Old CRP Rate	New CRP Rate	Percent Increase
Ca	\$43	\$60	40%
Co	53	75	42%
Cs	63	110	75%
DuB	43	85	98%
DuB3	33	75	127%
DuC3	33	60	82%
Fa	53	95	79%
GrA	48	85	77%
GrB	43	85	98%
GrB3	43	75	74%
GrC3	43	60	40%
Iu	48	95	98%
LeB	48	95	98%
LeB3	38	75	97%
LeC	48	85	77%
LeC3	43	60	40%
LeD	48	75	56%
LoB	48	110	129%
LoB3	43	85	98%
LoC3	43	75	74%
Ma	48	85	77%
MeA	68	110	62%
MeB	63	110	75%
MeB2	63	95	51%
MeC3	53	85	60%
Oc	48	85	77%
PrB	43	75	74%
PrC3	33	60	82%
Vk	63	110	75%
Wa	33	60	82%

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

(CRP) - Continuous Sign-up Since the rates were raised in September, 2002, the District has had 287 acres of 30 tracts enrolled in filter strips and 386 acres of 22 tracks enrolled in riparian forest buffers through the CRP continuous sign-up. These contracts will total well over \$500,000 in payments during the contract periods.



Strips of grass in crop fields adjacent to streams help to filter out soil particles, pesticides, and fertilizer before storm runoff enters our streams

NEW PRACTICES APPLIED - The District staff assisted cooperators with a number of conservation practices in 2003. Practices included 5,000 ft. of Terraces, 10 Grade Structures, 5 Ponds, 150 acres of Cropland Conversion, 37 acres of Native Warm Season Grass Establishment, 245 acres of Filter Strips, and 314 acres of Riparian Forest Buffers.



Conservation Practices such as No-till, Terraces, Contour Farming, Winter Cover Crops, and Crop Residue used for winter cover helps to preserve crop land by deterring soil erosion from sheet, rill, and ephemeral gullies



Such soil conservation practices helps to keep soil, pesticides, and nutrients in the fields and out of our streams!



Grade Control Structures trap storm runoff then conveys the storm runoff into stable waterways through non-erosive devices such as pipe, rock drop, or weir. Grade Structures keep valuable cropland from being consumed by head cuts and helps keep soil from moving into our streams



In 2003 the District provided assistance to install 10 grade control structures to control head-cuts along the edges of crop fields, such as the gully along a cotton field pictured above.

Native Warm Season Grasses (NWSG) –

The District assisted in the establishment of 37 acres of NWSG in 2003. NWSG is wildlife friendly. It provides nesting, food, and cover for quail, rabbit, deer, and turkey. The five most common species are Big Blue Stem, Little Blue Stem, Indian, Switch, and Eastern Gammon. Though various programs District Cooperators now have over 800 acres of NWSG planted on over 100 sites in the County.



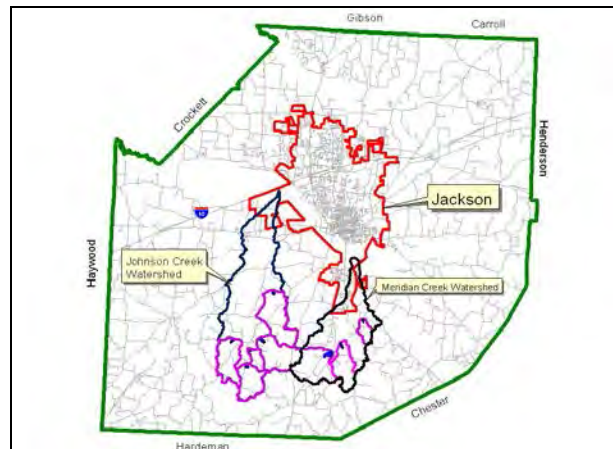
A stand of NWSG and Bicolor - Through various programs the District, in recent years, has assisted cooperators in the planting of over 800 acres of NWSG, a wildlife friendly cover.

WILDLIFE FOOD PLOTS – The District in partnership with the Forked Deer Chapter of Quail Unlimited, NRCS, the Chickasaw-Shiloh RC&D Council, and TWRA provided cooperators with prepackaged bags of seed for use in seeding half-acre wildlife food plots. Over 50 cooperators participated

INFORMATION ASSISTANCE - The District staff assisted several real estate agents, farm appraisers, environmental consultants, and individuals by providing them with soil information, soil maps, topography maps, flood insurance rate maps, wetland inventory maps, and historical aerial photographs of Madison County. **When a company decides to locate in Madison County a consultant firm often visits the District office to obtain information about the property.** Customers seeking natural resource information often compare us most favorable to other offices they visit, noting our organization, our quantity of information, and our helpfulness and efficiency. Our office has aerial

photography dating back to 1965, topographic maps dating back into the late 40s and early 50s. A 1997 aerial map is digitized in the computer which can be overlaid with feature maps such as soils, topography, Flood Insurance Rate Maps, roads, and streams.

WATERSHED DISTRICTS – The District has two active watershed districts, Johnson Creek and Meridian Creek. The Johnson Creek Watershed has 5 flood retardant structures and the Meridian Creek Watershed has 3. All of the dams were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s to deter flooding in and around Jackson. All of the structures passed recent state inspections but several are experiencing problems with their pipe spillways and will require expensive repairs in the near future. One of the dams had repairs performed on its earth spillways in 2003.



The Johnson and Meridian Creek Watersheds

MEMBERSHIPS – The District is proud to be a member of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), and the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD). As a member of these associations we pay our membership dues in full each year.

LETTERS TO STATE LEADERS

As conscientious conservation leaders recognizing the important role of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Resource Management Cost-share Best Management Grant each District supervisor sent letters of concern to Tennessee state leaders pleading that they continue to support this program. Although the grant funding is all but eliminated for the coming year the state leaders did offer words of encouragement for the program in the future.

Summary of District Accomplishments:

ITEM	NUMBER 2003	NUMBER ACTIVE	ACRES/ AMOUNT 2003	ACRES/AMOUNT ACTIVE	APPROXIMATE INCOMING DOLLARS 2003
Cooperators	500				
Highly Erodible Acres			80,000		
CRP Continuous Contracts	19	52	385	720	\$70,000
CRP General	101	250	3,930	9,000	\$500,000
TDA Contracts	11	60			\$10,000
EQIP Contracts	1	30			\$14,000
WRP Contracts	2	5	287	432	\$181,000
Filter Strips Contracted	13	30	97	288	
Forest Riparian Buffers Contracted	6	22	44	386	
Conservation Tillage			60,000		
Contour Cropping			20,000		
Winter Cover			5,000		
Crop Residue			80,000		
Terraces			5,000	1,000,000+ ft	
Grade Structures			10	100+	

**Tennessee Agricultural Statistics
Madison County 2002**

CROP	ACRES	YIELD	PRODUCTION
Corn	12,500	96 bu.	1,200,000
Soybeans	27,000	27 bu.	740,000
Wheat	5,000	42 bu.	210,000
Grain Sorghum	1,300	78 bu.	102,000
Hay	11,500	2.5 ton	28,500
Cotton	39,000	738 lbs.	28,782,000
All Cattle & Calves			NUMBERS 16,000
Beef Cattle			7,000
All Hogs & Pigs			6,000
Hogs & Pigs for Breeding			2,600

1997 Census of Agriculture

	AMOUNT
Total Acs. Madison Co.	358,000
Total Land in Farms	145,586
Average Farm Size	255
No. Of Full Time Farmers	221
Mkt. Value all Farm Products	\$28,896,000
Land in Timber 1989	141,357

**Madison County
Soil Conservation District
Affiliate Members 2003
Thanks for Your Support**

