



Madison County Soil
Conservation District

Madison County SCD
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Annual Report 2006



Serving to Conserve Madison
County's Soil and Related Natural
Resources Since 1941

A Word from our Chairman

As evidenced by our annual report, the District has had another good year, seeking and finding technical assistance and funding for our cooperators to aid them with the installation of sound soil conservation practices to the land.

As Chairman of the Madison County Soil Conservation District, I sincerely thank the local, state, and federal governments, their many participating agencies, the local affiliated businesses, and the many individuals, for the partnerships we have forged. Together we are able to work as one to conserve soil and its related natural resources.

I also extend my thanks to the many individual farmers and landowners that chose to work through the District this past year. Their actions to improve the natural resources of their land serve to improve the greater community in which we all live, not only for the people of the present generation, but also for the people of the generations that will follow. Their stewardship of the land and our environment is to be commended.

**Allen Verell, Chairman
Madison County Soil Conservation District**

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Madison County Soil Conservation District

**MADISON COUNTY
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2006**

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, organized in accordance with the purposes, provisions, powers and restrictions set forth within the Tennessee Soil Conservation District Law 43-14-201 through 43-14-223. 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). This district is 1 of 95 districts in Tennessee and 1 of nearly 3,000 districts in the United States.

MISSION STATEMENT – Our mission is to improve the quality of life in Madison County through the conservation of soil and its related natural resources by promoting conservation and by locating technical expertise and financial aid that will assist and encourage land managers including farmers, ranchers, and wildlife enthusiasts to voluntarily apply conservation practices that will conserve soil productivity while enhancing the vitality of the related resources of water, plants, animals, air, and most importantly people.

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS - A board of supervisors, responsible for developing and administrating 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.



Madison County Soil Conservation District Board 2006: Left to Right: Joel Haynes, Secretary-Treasurer; Bob Bryant; Allen Verell, Chairman; Don Johnson; Mike Pearson, Vice Chairman

Chairman, Allen Verell, of the Huntersville Community was elected to the board in 1995, elected to a second term in 1998, a third in 2001, and to a 4th term in 2004. Allen served as a past Director of TACD for Area VIII. Allen is a full time farmer and is a past recipient of the District Conservation Farmer Award.

Vice-Chairman, Mike Pearson of the Adair Community was elected to the board in 1995, elected to a second term in 1998, a third in 2001, and to a 4th term in 2004. Mike is a full time farmer.

Secretary-Treasurer, Joel Haynes, of the Huntersville Community, was appointed to the board in 2000 by the state soil conservation committee, and reappointed to a 2nd term in 2003 and a 3rd in 2006. 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.

Bob Bryant, of the Beech Bluff Community was elected to the board in 2001 and elected to serve a second term in 2004. 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 has served 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 was appointed to the Board in 2003 by the state soil conservation committee and reappointed to a 2nd term in 2006. Don currently serves as the Director of TACD for Area VIII. 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 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 2006, which we claim as our own. They were:

Federal Employees



Brad Denton, District Conservationist

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



Kenneth Williams, Soil Conservationist

Kenneth, a Soil Conservationist for NRCS, has been stationed with the District 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. - 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. Over 100 guests attended. Everyone enjoyed a steak dinner catered by Richard's of Bolivar. David Salyers, Executive Director of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority, spoke about their program and the many services they provide the people of West Tennessee. Mr. Salyers used a slide show to highlight the tornado debris removal from streams they conducted in Madison County with the partnership of NRCS, the District, and Madison County. Wards Grove Farms was recognized as the District's Outstanding Cooperator of 2005.



Over 100 guests attended the Banquet



The guests enjoyed a steak dinner catered by Richard's of Bolivar



*Allen Presents Mark and Teresa Caldwell
The 2005 Outstanding District Cooperator Award*



*Mark and Teresa Caldwell
Wards Grove Farms*

FORMER SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR RECEIVES NACD DISTINGUISH SERVICE AWARD – (Feb)

Franklin James, former District supervisor and board chairman, was honored at the TACD Annual Convention as he was presented the NACD Distinguish Service



Award. Franklin served on the board for over 30 years and was board chairman for 28 years. While serving on the board, at various times, Franklin served in TACD positions. After retiring from the board, Franklin established over 90 acres of filterstrips on his farm. Due to his conservation work Franklin was recognized by the District as its Outstanding Cooperator in 2003.

TACD SUMMER MEETING- (August)

District cooperator **Teddy Hazlehurst**, the District's 2005 Outstanding Cooperator, received further recognition for his conservation work. Teddy was recognized at the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts



(TACD) West Tennessee summer meeting, as he received the TACD's Area VIII 2006 Outstanding Cooperator Award and the TACD's West Tennessee 2006 Outstanding Cooperator Award.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

The district works with federal, state, and local governments, various agencies, conservation groups, and businesses to obtain technical and financial assistance for district cooperators. The following are conservation programs that were available to district cooperators in 2006.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP) -

EQIP is a USDA-NRCS program which provides agricultural landowners and operators with technical assistance and up to 50% cost-share toward the installation of conservation practices. In 2006 District cooperators received \$53,690 in EQIP funding toward the installation of over \$100,000 of conservation practices that served 258 acres.

TDA AG BMP GRANT – In 2006 the district entered into 11 contracts with cooperators to provide them with \$26,000 of cost-share to apply conservation practices on 33 farms that benefited 2,200 acres. The funding was provided through a Tennessee Department of Agriculture grant that provided up to 75% cost-share to agricultural land managers to apply conservation practices recognized for improving the water quality of Tennessee's rivers and streams.

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 and cropped. The land is restored to its natural hydrology and planted to bottomland hardwood trees. Wetlands benefit the environment in several ways, including filtering ground water and recharging aquifers, and providing habitat for wetland plants and animals. As of the end of 2006 the District has 6 WRP contracts totaling 344 acres of wetland easements that were acquired by USDA for \$148,836.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP) - CRP is a USDA-FSA farm program that seeks to conserve soil on non-federal lands, improve the water quality of rivers and streams, enhance wildlife habitat, and stabilize and diversify farm income. Through CRP, landowners can rent eligible cropland to the government for 10 to 15 years. The landowner has to establish the land to an acceptable conservation cover and the cover must be maintained for the life of the contract. USDA reimburses the landowners up to 50% of the establishment costs and will pay the landowner an annual rent based on the soil's relative productivity. There are several different CRP programs available. In 2006, 733 acres were accepted into CRP programs. As of the end of 2006 there are 13,700 acres enrolled in CRP under 517 contracts throughout Madison County. In 2006 CRP recipients received nearly \$1,000,000 in USDA payments.

Dry Creek Watershed Tributary Restoration Project Scientific studies have shown that the Dry Creek watershed in Madison-Hardeman Counties is a major contributing source of the significant sand volumes clogging Clover Creek and the scenic Hatchie River. The Nature Conservancy along with the Chickasaw-Shiloh RC&D Council, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, NRCS, and the District partnered together to work with landowners to get conservation on the ground with the purpose of reducing the sand load of the creek. In 2006, three cooperators contracted with RC&D to carry out conservation work on 13 farms. The work included over 500 acres of no-till, 388 acres of winter cover, and the installation of a livestock watering facility, (trough, pipeline, and heavy use area) servicing 25 acres of pasture land. The participating cooperators were reimbursed \$13,000 of their \$25,000 total cost.

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.



CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE

Each year the district is involved with the installation and application of several conservation practices that control soil erosion, improve the water quality of rivers and streams, and provide habitat for wildlife.

Engineering Assistance - Office staff provides cooperators with engineering services including site surveys, practice design, practice layout, construction assistance; checkout and certification. Through funding from TDA, CRP, and the EQIP programs the District provided engineering



assistance on several practices in 2006 including 13 grade stabilization structures and 1,800 feet of terraces. These conservation structures will intervene in the storm runoff from approximately 450 acres. By functioning to stop the advancement of in-field gullies the installation of these conservation practices will preserve the productivity of streams and improve the water quality of streams.

Livestock Watering Facilities, such as the one pictured, including troughs, heavy use areas, and pipelines provide livestock with an alternative source of water, keeping them out of creeks and streams where they muddy the water and discharge bodily wastes. In 2006, the District assisted with the design and installation of 2 Livestock Watering facilities. Such an alternative to ponds provide livestock with clean water free of animal wastes and other contaminants that slow weight gain and cut into profits.



Rotational Grazing Overgrazing is a common problem that ranchers face when attempting to maximize income. Over grazing causes an increase in soil erosion and other environmental concerns.



However, large herds can be maintained by ranchers fencing their farm into partitions of equal size and rotating their livestock between paddocks with common access to watering and feeding troughs. This allows grass to re-grow before being grazed again. To encourage rotational grazing, in 2006, the district, through EQIP funding, assisted with the installation of over 1,900 feet of cross fencing.

Grass Establishment The biggest source of sediment runoff is from tilled cropland and one of the best protective covers for the land is grass. In 2006 the district assisted cooperators with nearly 850 acres of grass establishment utilizing the TDA, EQIP, and CRP programs.



Native Warm Season Grasses for Wildlife Cover (NWSG) – Native Warm Season Grasses (NWSG).



NWSG are wildlife friendly Grasses. They provide essential cover for quail, rabbit, deer, and turkey. The five best species for wildlife cover are Big Blue Stem, Little Blue Stem, Indian,

Switch, and Eastern Gammon. Through various programs the District, has assisted cooperators with the planting of over 3,500 acres of NWSG in recent years. 427 acres were seeded by cooperators through CRP in 2006.

Filter Strips - Although grass provides one of the best protective covers for the land it wouldn't be practical to establish all cropland to grass. However, grass established at strategic places on farms can go a long way toward improving the water quality of streams. Filter strips are 20 to 100 foot wide strips of grass located along the lower part of crop fields and adjacent to streams. Filter strips are an important



conservation practice as they intercept potential stream contaminants from storm runoff. By slowing storm runoff from crop fields, filter strips allow suspended soil particles, organics, nutrients, pesticides, and other materials to settle out into the grass strip. These potential contaminants are then filtered by the soil or are taken up by the grass. With filter strips many materials are intercepted and are prevented from entering streams as contaminants. In recent years the district has worked with cooperators in the establishment of over 450 acres of filter strips.

Habitat Buffers for upland birds – are planted as field



boarders around crop fields to provide food and cover for quail, upland birds and other wildlife species. In 2006 the District assisted cooperators with the establishment of 95 acres of

field boarders on 13 farms through CRP contracts. Madison County leads the state with the CRP acres established in Habitat Buffers with 52 cooperators having established 712 acres.

Cover Crops - Cover Crops are an excellent practice to protect the land over the winter months. When winter cover crops are combined with the practices of no-till cropping and crop residue the soil's productive capacity can be maintained indefinitely. In 2006 the district assisted cooperators with the seeding of 2,363 acres of early seeded cover crops through the TDA and the Dry Creek programs.



EQUIPMENT FOR RENT

NO-TILL DRILLS - The District has two no-till drills for rent by people in and around Madison County, a 7-foot Tye Pasture Pleaser and a 10-foot Haybuster. They



are housed by, and can be rented through the Mid South Farmers Co-op. The drills were obtained through grants from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA).

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 around 1960. 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. The dams and lake help to prevent flooding in and around Jackson by controlling some 15,000 acres of storm runoff.



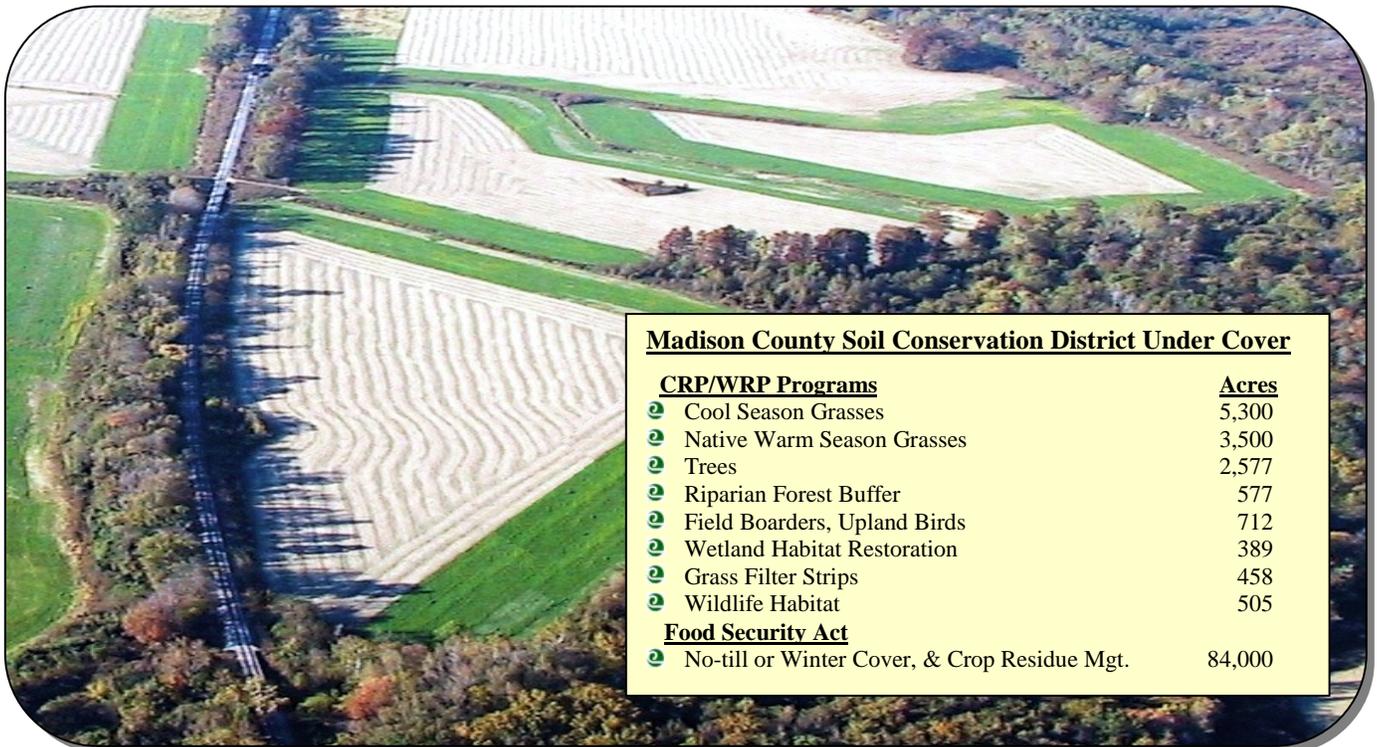
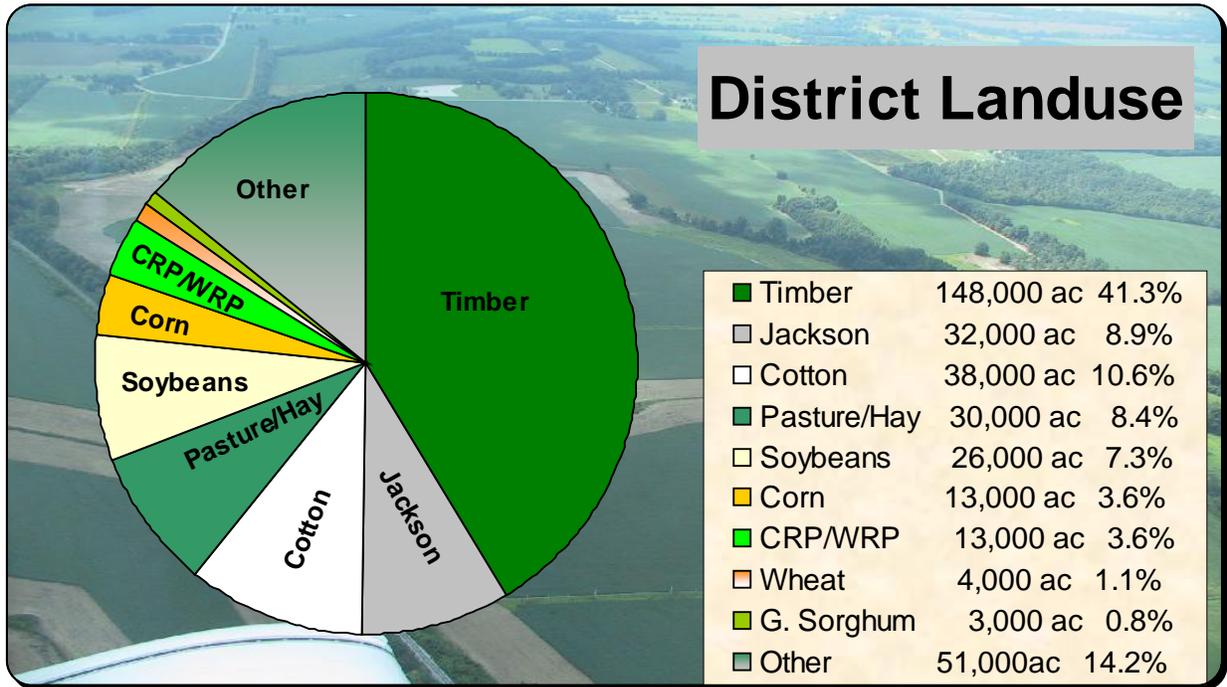
INFORMATION ASSISTANCE - The District staff assisted several real estate agents, farm appraisers, environmental consultants, and individuals by providing them with soil information, copies of soil maps, topography maps, flood insurance rate maps, wetland inventory maps, and historical aerial photographs 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 our office 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 and topographic maps dating back into the late 40s and early 50s. 1997 and 2004 aerial maps are digitized in the computer. These maps are geo-referenced enabling them

to be overlaid with great accuracy using feature maps such as soils, topography, Flood Insurance Rate Maps, roads, county boundaries, and streams. This capability provides a multifaceted map product for our customers.

An Overview of the District



**Madison County
Soil Conservation District
Affiliate Members 2006
Thanks for Your Support**



Sidney David Florist