

Madison County  
Soil Conservation District  
313 N Parkway  
Jackson, TN 38305

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[www.madisonscd.com](http://www.madisonscd.com)

Chairman, Allen Verell  
Vice-Chairman, Don Johnson  
Sec. –Treas., Joel Haynes  
Member, Bob Bryant  
Member, Don Pearson

Serving to Conserve  
Madison County's  
Natural Resources  
Since 1941



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# NEWSLETTER



MADISON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Serving to Conserve Madison County's Natural Resources Since 1941

## A Word from Our Chairman



*Agriculture is an important sector of our local economy. Well over half of Madison County's 358,000 acres are considered farmland. The sale of agricultural goods raised on Madison County farms average around \$25 million annually. The value of our farms is in excess on \$.5 billion. Each year USDA farm programs bring millions of dollars into Madison County much of which is used for conservation to preserve cropland. The money generated by local agriculture circulates several times throughout the various sectors of our local economy. As Chairman of the Madison County Soil Conservation District I am proud of the central role our District plays in agriculture and the greater community. 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 soil related natural resources. I extend my thanks to the many individual farmers and landowners that work with the District. Their voluntary efforts to conserve their land, the water, and soil related natural resources benefit the greater community and assure productive farmland for future generations. Their work is indeed commendable.*

*Please visit the District's website at [www.madisonscd.com](http://www.madisonscd.com). The site contains information about the District, Soil, Water, Plants & Animals, Conservation Programs, and Conservation Practices. It has several helpful links to sites related to conservation, soil, water, related government agencies, agriculture, and more.*

*Allen Verell*, Chairman  
Madison County Soil Conservation District

*The Madison County Soil Conservation District does not discriminate on the basis of a person's race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.*

*The District is a recipient of taxpayer funding. If you observe an agency director or employee engaging in any activity which you consider to be illegal, improper, or wasteful, please call the comptroller's toll free hotline: 1-800-232-5454.*



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Jackson, Tennessee 38305

Madison County Soil Conservation District  
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**Board of Supervisors**

**Allen Verell**  
Chairman

**Don Johnson**  
Vice-Chairman

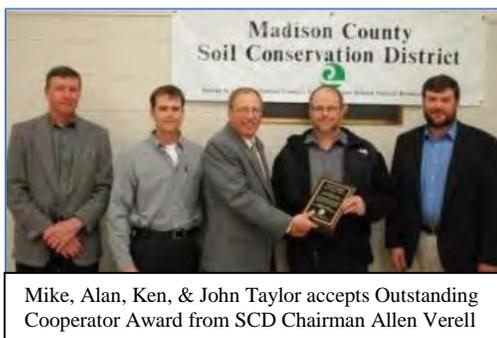
**Joel Haynes**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Bob Bryant**  
Member

**Don Pearson**  
Member

**Annual District Awards and Appreciation Banquet 2013**

Over 100 guests attended the District's annual awards and appreciation banquet held on March 7th at the Madison County Agricultural Complex Auditorium. Attendees enjoyed a steak dinner catered by Richard's of Bolivar.



Mike, Alan, Ken, & John Taylor accepts Outstanding Cooperator Award from SCD Chairman Allen Verell

**Outstanding District Cooperator** - At the banquet Taylor Farms of western Madison County was recognized as the District's 2012 Outstanding District Cooperator. In 2012 Taylor Farms worked closely with the district and NRCS to control gully erosion that threatened their farm land within the Panther Creek Watershed. After assessing the problem, office staff surveyed the sites and designed five pipe drop

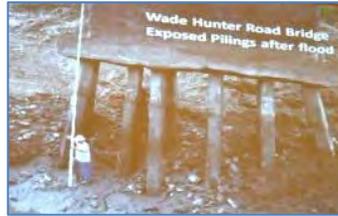


grade stabilization structures. The structures consisted of small dams with large pipes designed according to NRCS standards and specifications. The dams temporarily store storm runoff and direct it to large pipes that safely drop water into the creek. The cost of the three structures exceeded several thousand dollars which was paid in part through a cost-share grant from the USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program. (EQIP). Taylor Farms have several more pipe drops planned for installation this fall.

# Annual District Awards and Appreciation Banquet 2013 Continued



**Guest Speaker –**  
Curt McDaniel, District Conservationist with NRCS at the Ripley Field Office, gave a presentation



on the Cane Creek Stabilization Project in Lauderdale County that was completed last year. Curt noted that the channel degradation, caused by channelization started in 1960 and completed in 1970 to reduce flooding, had been a problem for years. What was a 12 foot deep creek was now 40 foot deep. As the main channel got deeper bridge pillows driven well into the soil were under mined and laterals along the main channel were unraveling devouring cropland. NRCS had surveyed the creek and had designs ready for years but had lacked funding. When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act came along most everything was ready for work to begin; a requirement of the ACT. The goals of the \$14 million creek stabilization project, the largest ARRIA watershed rehab project, were to protect threatened infrastructure, stabilize the creek channel, protect prime farmland, and to reduce erosion and sediment load. The project consists of giant rock chutes installed at strategic points within the main channel and in laterals. The chutes safely drop the water in a stair step manner over the non-erosive rock. The project required 140,000 tons of rock or about 7,000 truckloads. It saved 6 bridges and reduced sediment by 245,000 tons per year. It protected 23 laterals, 1,000 acres of cropland, and created \$100 million in rural stimulus.

We thank our many sponsors for making the banquet possible. We also thank Sand's Old Hickory Florist for the beautiful floral centerpiece and Four Seasons Nursery for the 21 potted flowers and the \$25 gift certificate to Four Seasons that they donated. The potted plants, the gift certificate, and the centerpiece were given to the guests as door prizes.

<p>Andrew Melton</p>	<p>Don Johnson &amp; Couch Farms</p>
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<p>Billy Jack Hopper</p>		<p>Brad Shumaker</p>
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<p>Right Where You Are™</p>	<p>Teddy Hazlehurst</p>	<p>John Myers</p>	<p>Auto • Home • Life</p>	<p>James Wages</p>
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<p>Kirk Goehring</p>	<p>R &amp; J Feed Supply</p>	<p>Sam Chhim Mike Harber</p>	<p>Chuck Crutchfield</p>
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<p>2489 Hwy 455 Jackson, TN 38301 731-427-0736</p>	<p>Jackson, TN 38305 731-668-3140</p>
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# **Madison County SCD Hosts the West Tennessee Soil Health Conference**

July 16th



The Madison County Soil Conservation District was host to the West Tennessee Soil Health Conference held on July 16<sup>th</sup> at Liberty Technology Magnet High School in Jackson. Approximately 250 to 300 farmers, district supervisors, and agricultural professionals from throughout West Tennessee attended the meeting. Madison County SCD had a total of 25 attend including all five district supervisors. Allen Verell, chairman of Madison County SCD, presided over the meeting. U. S. Congressman Stephen Fincher dropped in briefly, on his way to Washington, to say a few words. The featured speaker was Ray Archuleta, an energetic agronomist and motivational speaker with NRCS who travels throughout the Country speaking on behalf of soil health. Ray discussed the science behind soil health, and with the help of Madison County farmers John Thomas Moore and Johnny Marsh they demonstrated some basic comparison between healthy soil and abused soil. Ray shared the podium with Barry Fisher an Indiana grain farmer and NRCS agronomist. Barry shared his experience farming in harmony with the soil and nature, and the numbers behind Soil Health. Healthy Soils provide an environment conducive to crop growth that requires less fertilizer, fewer pesticides, and less water, while reducing erosion, improving water quality, and increasing net income. Healthy soils are achieved by disturbing the soil as little as possible, growing as many different species of plants as practical, keeping living plants in the soil as much as possible, and keeping the soil covered all the time. It basically utilizes no-till, and crop rotation, combined with a mixture of grasses, legumes, and tubers grown during the winter to protect the soil from erosion and to enhance the physical, biological and chemical properties of the soil.



Above is a rainfall simulator that was on display at the conference. The jars out front were collecting the runoff. The jars beneath were collecting infiltration. The exhibit demonstrated the relationship of nurtured & neglected soils to runoff and infiltration.

**Thanks go out to our sponsors: MidSouth Farmers Coop, Tennessee Tractor, Syngenta, Helena Chemical, and Knott's Foods.**

## Conservation Cost-Share Programs Available

**NRCS & TDA** provide funding for conservation work to address erosion and water quality under the EQIP and ARCF programs. Practices include gully control structures, livestock watering facilities, grass establishment, cross fencing, winter cover crops and others. It is best if you sign-up before October 1<sup>st</sup>, contact the district office, 668-1544.



**CRP** - FSA has an on-going sign-up for certain CRP practices. These practices include filter strips, riparian forest buffers, bottomland hardwoods, upland bird habitat field borders, and SAFE. The CRP program provides funding to take land out of production and to establish it to soil conserving wildlife friendly plantings, including grasses, forbs, and trees. Funding includes cost-share for establishment costs and an annual rental payment of up to \$185 per acre. For questions concerning CRP contact the FSA office, 731-668-1544.



**WRP** - NRCS has an on-going sign-up for purchasing easements to convert certain cropland back to wetland through the establishment of bottomland hardwoods. Easement acquisitions for Madison County are currently \$2,400/acre for crop and pasture land and \$1,480/acre for woodland. Contact the NRCS field office, 668-1544.



**Drill for Rent** - The District has a 10 foot wide Haybuster no-till drill that has the ability to handle NWSG seed. The drill is housed at and managed by the Mid-South Farmers Co-op in Madison County. It rents for \$7.50 per acre with a minimum charge of ten acres. For rental information and availability contact the co-op at 668-3070.

## Don Pearson Elected to the Madison County Soil Conservation District Board -

Please welcome Don Pearson of the Adair community as the newest member of the Madison County SCD board. Don and his brother Mike farm around the Adair community and in south central

Madison County. Don was elected to the board during the March SCD board of supervisor election. Don is one of three board members that are elected by Madison County landowners. The other two board members are appointed by the state soil conservation committee. The term of each board member is 3 years. The present board consists of Chairman, Allen Verell; of the Huntersville



community, who is elected, has served on the board since 1995 and was reelected to the board this spring, Vice-Chairman, Don Johnson; of the Denmark community, who is appointed, has served on the board since 2003 and was reappointed in 2012, Secretary-Treasurer, Joel Haynes; of the Huntersville community, who is appointed, has served on the board since 1999 and was reappointed in 2011, and Bob Bryant; of the Beech Bluff community, who is elected, has served on the board since 2001 and was reelected this spring. Joel currently serves as a director of the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts, TACD, representing Madison, Haywood, Henderson, Decatur, Carroll, Benton, and Henry Soil Conservation Districts.





**fields, side-by-side, tell the story “ground cover and organic matter makes a difference”**

This spring I wrote a letter to farmers addressing farming practices that I had followed the last few years; farming practices that produced very disappointing results this spring. I would like to once again share my concerns with you in this newsletter.

Dear Madison County Landowners and Farmers:



As farmers, my son and I love and respect the land. Over the years we have tried to do everything we can to be productive farmers while being good land stewards. I am proud of our past efforts. However, the results of our latest efforts have been very disappointing. We could have done things much different this year.

Since the 1990s, I along with many other farmers have been no-tilling to protect the soil. No-till has served us well for many years. The organic matter of the top soil has increased, runoff and soil erosion has decreased and our yields have increased. However, in the past few years many farmers, including myself, have used tillage equipment to air and warm the ground for earlier planting. If I had not used this equipment I may not have gotten all of my corn planted. But what price did I pay? This year I ran a disk and dozer over some rough spots prior to planting. The areas were smooth for planting but when I went over the ground the next time the erosion was so bad that the weights on my tractor were hitting the ground. This is not acceptable.

Fields, side-by-side, tell the story. One field I have no-tilled for years. After a storm the water coming out of the field appears clear enough to drink. In the field where I had ran the tillage equipment the runoff from that field is muddy, the road ditch is full of sediment, and the road is covered with silt. Years of work to protect the soil and improve the soil’s organic matter, with its many benefits, have been lost. This is not acceptable.

This year, as we farm our fields, I asked that we assess our farming methods and consider how we can leave the soil richer, not poorer, for the next generation of farmers.

Farming is always demanding and this spring it was particularly challenging. I would never tell you how to farm but as Chairman of the Madison County Soil Conservation District and more importantly as a farmer, I think we can and must do better. Today, our planters are bigger, stronger, and are designed to plant in heavy residue. There is no need to destroy the valuable ground cover that protects our soil from erosion. With today’s technology it is unacceptable to return to the farming practices of the sixties and seventies that ravaged our soil.

Your friend,

Allen Verell, Chairman  
Madison County SCD