

Lamar County Fall 2018 Newsletter

Soil & Water Conservation District

By: Wesley Doyle, Lamar Co. Soil & Water Conservation District Program Assistant

Upcoming Events

January & February 2019
Grass Masters (Monroe County)

January 13-15, 2019
GACD Annual Meeting; Lake Lanier Island, GA

February 2-6, 2019
NACD Annual Conference; San Antonio, Texas

A Look Ahead...

Nutrient Management Workshop
Winter 2019; More information available soon!

Forestry Workshop
2019; More information available soon!



Your District Board

Chad Thompson, Chairman
Russ Walters, Vice Chairman

Lynn Parker, Treasurer
Glen Studle
Andy Bush

Wesley Doyle, District Program Assistant

Lamar County Soil & Water Conservation District

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lamar County Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote the wise use of our soil, water and related natural resources through education, public information, leadership, technical assistance and development of innovative programs.

~Adopted 2018~

Barnesville NRCS Staff

Carmen Westerfield, District Conservationist
Brenda Logan, Lamar/Upson Co. Technician
William Pitts, Pike Co. Technician
Carolyn Toman, Monroe Co. Technician

Local Outreach

Lamar County

Career Expo

The Barnesville USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently showcased career opportunities with the agency and other types of conservation efforts available to high school students at the Lamar County College and Career Academy in Barnesville, Georgia.



Lamar/Upson County Technician Brenda Logan and Lamar County & Towliga Conservation District Program Assistant Wesley Doyle spoke to several hundred interested high school students about the types of careers available to interested and qualified candidates.

Students learned what career opportunities were available within the agency and what background of study they should have in order to work with NRCS. Other USDA agencies in attendance to the expo include the Farm Service Agency and Rural Development (both also with offices in the Barnesville USDA Service Center). Career handouts and district promotional items were available to students should they want to research more career opportunities with the USDA and NRCS.



Conservation District Program Assistant Wesley Doyle and Lamar/Upson County Technician Brenda Logan presented the various opportunities with NRCS available to aspiring professionals within the science and agriculture career fields.

Veteran Farmer *Spotlight*

Mr. Tom Aiken

Written By: Wesley Doyle, Lamar Co. SWCD Program Assistant

Retired Lt. Colonel of U.S. Marine Corps and Farmer in Lamar County

There are few community leaders that can recount a tremendous life of service as vividly as Mr. Tom Aiken, a proud veteran farmer and pioneer of conservation in Lamar County, Georgia. Mr. Aiken graduated from the University of Georgia in 1958 with a degree in Agricultural Economics.

Tom has made the ultimate sacrifice in his service to our great country; but he had known in his heart from an early age that he wanted to join the military. Mr. Aiken served in the United States Marine Corps for 20 years from 1958-1978; he then retired in 1978 as Lieutenant Colonel of the United States Marine Corps. However, having grown up on a farm in Newton County, Tom felt throughout his service in the military that he wanted to eventually return to farming.



"I have always enjoyed the Marine Corps...[but] the whole time I was in the Marine Corps, I wanted to farm, you know? That was always in the back of my mind. I was born on a farm and grew up on a farm," said Mr. Aiken.

Thank a veteran for your
freedom.

Thank a farmer for your
food.

Circle A Farms, owned by the Aikens family, was established in 1980 when Tom purchased the lot of land in Lamar County. His family built the house, barns, ponds and established fencing soon after. In 1981, the Aikens family planted its first Christmas tree farm on the Circle A Farm's property, creating an area-wide popular destination for family-friendly Christmas traditions for years to come. The last tree was planted in 2005, but Tom wouldn't trade those years of being a part of family traditions for anything.

"It was a good thing...Christmastime comes and the kids looked so happy," recalls Tom. "I'd give them a saw when they came through the [entry] gate and turn them loose! It was a fun time...and I never had any problems."

Mr. Aiken has also served on many community boards in the area, including President of the Barnesville-Lamar County Chamber of Commerce and, most notably, his part in the creation of the Lamar County Soil & Water Conservation District. Mr. Aiken, along with Dr. Jack Tuttle, Ralph Adamson, Edwin Foshee and Mary Childs Hardin chartered and established the Lamar County Soil & Water Conservation District in the early 1980's. He was also a significant contributor to the conception, organization and construction of the Lamar County Wetland Nature Trail in Barnesville in the late 1990's.

Tom recounts how much time he has dedicated to conservation in Lamar County, but he now stresses the need for the youth and upcoming farmers to appreciate the land as it becomes their own—as well as to know how to tend to the needs of that particular type of land.

"I've always thought that you need to leave your piece of land better than you found it," says Tom.

After examining the legacy he has created here in Lamar County from his service to the community to the farmland that he owns, it is evident that Tom has done just that. And for that, Mr. Aiken and so many other veteran farmers, we are forever grateful.

Partnership profile



Committed to the future of rural communities.

Tizra Dozier, USDA—Rural Development Area Specialist, 17 years experience

What counties does the Barnesville Rural Development Office serve?

Our office serves the counties of Bibb, Bleckley, Chattahoochee, Crawford, Houston, Macon, Marion, Muscogee, Peach, Pulaski, Schley, Taylor, Twiggs, Butts, Henry, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Monroe, Pike, Spalding, Upson, Clay, Lee, Quitman, Randolph, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell, and Webster.

What is the purpose of your agency?

We host programs that improve the quality of life for people living in small, rural communities. Our primary focus is to improve the economy and services of rural areas. We work with community leaders at their request and at their pace. We are partners with the business community, including banks, mortgage brokers and other lenders.

What programs do you have related to conservation?

We provide loans and grants to create or improve water, sewer and electrical systems. Specifically, we offer grants related to renewable energy and energy efficiency. Funds from these grants can be used to pay up to 25% of eligible costs for energy efficiency improvements, i.e. insulation or new equipment, or to produce a renewable energy product, i.e. ethanol, biodiesel or solar.

How do I get in contact with you if I have questions or want more information?



Our office phone number is (770) 358-0787 ex. 4 or you can email me at tizra.dozier@ga.usda.gov

Fun Fact!

Tizra is a U.S. Army Veteran, having served 3 years in active duty military service just out of college.