

Georgia NRCS announces conservation stewardship program sign up

Submitted by
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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications from agricultural producers and forest landowners from Georgia for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Agricultural producers and forest landowners looking to build on conservation efforts while strengthening their operation can apply for technical and financial assistance through CSP.

While USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) accepts CSP applications year-round, Georgia producers and landowners should apply by April 1, 2022, to be considered for funding in the current cycle.

State Technical Committees, composed of conservation and agricultural-related agency and organization representatives, work with NRCS to identify resource priorities and how best to address them. NRCS then sets state-specific, ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding that account for producer needs, staff workload and ensure potential participants have ample opportunities to apply. Find Georgia's ranking dates for CSP and other conservation programs at www.nrcs.usda.gov/staterankingdates.

NRCS offers CSP in all 50 states and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign ups. The program provides many benefits, including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements, and increased resilience to adverse weather. CSP is for working lands, including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under Indian tribe jurisdiction.

Additionally, existing CSP

participants may have an opportunity to renew their contracts in the first half of the fifth year of their five-year contract through a competitive application process.

Special provisions are available for historically underserved producers, which include those considered beginning, socially disadvantaged, and limited resource, as well as military veterans. These producers have targeted funds.

Find eligible practices in Georgia and practice payment amounts at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/?cid=nrcseprd1328233>. Payment rates for conservation practices are reviewed and set each fiscal year for the state.

To apply for CSP, contact NRCS at your local USDA Service Center. Find your local Service Center at www.farmers.gov/service-locator. Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors. Contact your Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. On <http://www.farmers.gov>, you can create a secure account, apply for NRCS programs, electronically sign documents and manage your conservation contracts.

More Information

Through conservation programs, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help producers and landowners make conservation improvements on their land that benefit natural resources, build resiliency, and contribute to the nation's broader effort to combat the impacts of climate change. More broadly, these efforts build on others across USDA to encourage use of conservation practices. For

example, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) recently provided \$59.5 million in premium support for producers who planted cover crops on 12.2 million acres through the new Pandemic Cover Crop Program. Last week, RMA announced a new option for insurance coverage, the Post Application Coverage Endorsement, for producers who "split apply" fertilizer on corn.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our nation's lands, biodiversity and natural resources including our soil, air, and water. Through conservation practices and partnerships, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including state, local and Tribal governments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

SPORTS

Varsity baseball team wins February 28 double-header

By **DREW WILSON**
Head Baseball Coach

The Washington-Wilkes Tigers Varsity Baseball team won both games in their double header Saturday, February 28.

First up were the Aquinas Fighting Irish. The Tigers smashed Aquinas, winning in run rule fashion 16-1 in 4 innings. Nathan Durham got the start on the mound pitching all 4 innings, allowing only two hits, one run, and striking out seven. Andrew Meech led the Tiger offensive going three for three with three RBI's. Hunter Price and Bryson Porter each had multiple hits in the game. This was the first game of two on Saturday at Jenkins County's Diamond Day.

Next, the Tigers beat Jenkins County in their second game of the day 9-2. Morgan Shedd got the start on the mound for the Tigers and pitched six innings allowing two runs on four hits, striking out eight. Hunter Price pitched the seventh inning and stuck out the side. The offensive was led by several players with multiple hits Jackson Thornton (2-2), Price (2-4), Nathan Durham (2-4), Levi Durham (2-4), and Nick Harkins (2-4). The Tigers improve to 4-0 at the conclusion of the second week of play this season, and will play three games in the third week of the season. The Tigers will host their Diamond Day on Saturday, March 5 playing their first game at noon against GSIC and play Elbert at 5:30 p.m. The Tigers next game is Tuesday, March 1 at Gatewood Academy 5:30 p.m.



A Tiger player attempts to kick a goal

Boys soccer team falls to Commerce

By **MICHAEL BOWEN**
Publisher

The Washington-Wilkes boys soccer team struggled against Commerce, losing 8-3 in their game February 24.

Commerce leapt to an early lead over the Tigers with a goal in the opening minutes of the game. The Tigers countered with a score of their own shortly after. As the teams battled, Commerce regained the lead with 14:40 left before halftime. The Tiger offense rallied but did not manage to score before halftime.

Things continued in a similar fashion for the rest of the game, as Commerce maintained a healthy lead that the Tigers simply could not overtake.

The team will play two home games, one against Greene County March 3, and then against Lincoln County March 11. They will also play an away game March 8 against Barrow Arts and Sciences Academy.

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