

LSWCD Staff

Brad Russ

District Resource Coordinator

Cindy Strickland

Resource Conservationist

Patty Fletcher

Office Associate IV

James "Bobby" Brown

Mobile Irrigation Lab, Team Leader

James Joiner

Mobile Irrigation Lab, Team Member

LAKE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 2 — APRIL 2008

District

Supervisors

Nadine Foley

Terry Godts

John Harris

Frank Paulhamus

Betsy Farner

USDA -NRCS Staff

Kesha Martin

District Conservationist

Lake Regional Envirothon



Land Judging



1st Place Team "Catharsisists"

Lenny Finelli (with trophy), Advisor Sandi Good, Jasmine Stewart, Carter Sligh (with large trophy), Trisha DeTorres, Joyner Atiles, Advisor Joan Wukotich (behind Carter Sligh)



1st Place Team "East Ridge High School FFA Gold"

Jennifer Hurley, Casey Lewis, Casey Raines, and Melissa Shutts (Advisor Danny Garner)

The Lake Soil and Water Conservation District hosted the Fifth Annual Lake Regional Envirothon on February 20 at the Hickory Point Recreational Facility in Tavares with fourteen teams competing. The competition included a written exam and hands-on investigations in a field setting.

Envirothons are a natural resource education event for high school students. Five-member teams are led by an advisor and study prepared resource materials on aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a selected current environmental issue. For this competition, the environmental issue was "Recreational Impacts on Natural Resources."



Participants of the Fifth Annual Lake Regional Envirothon pose for a group photograph.

Students in Future Farmers of America participated in the land judging competition sponsored by Lake Soil and Water Conservation District on March 3 at the Palatka Environmental and Agricultural Reserve (PEAR) park in Leesburg with a total of five teams competing.

- 1st Place East Ridge High School FFA, Gold Team
- 2nd Place East Ridge High School FFA, Blue Team
- 3rd Place East Ridge High School FFA, Silver Team

Individual High Scores:

- 1st Place Jennifer Hurley, East Ridge Gold
- 2nd Place Lisseth De La Cruz, East Ridge Silver and Savannah Olson, Clermont Middle
- 3rd Place Nicole Lewis, East Ridge Blue Team

After the competition, Richard Ford, USDA-NRCS, Soil Scientist, reviewed the four pits. The students evaluated the soil for characteristics, planned use (foundations, lawns/shrubs/gardens, septic systems), and limitations.



See Envirothon, page 2

See Land Judging, page 2

Envirothon continued



"The Killer Tomatoes" at the Soils station with soil survey books and testing soil pH.

The top scoring team is eligible to compete in the Florida Envirothon on April 12 at Myakka River State Park in Sarasota.

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1 st Place "Catharsists" | Leesburg High School |
| 2 nd Place "Angry Beavers" | Leesburg High School |
| 3 rd Place "The Killer Tomatoes" | Tavares High School |

Awards were presented by Ann Griffin, Lake County Water Authority, Board of Trustees.



"Angry Beavers" at the Current Issue station with Carol Johnson, Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Students voice their opinion about the use of natural lands

When students at the Lake Regional Envirothon were asked if natural lands should be open for public use, the resounding response was "yes," with certain reservations.

Why?

- Because of the knowledge that can be gained.
- So that people will learn to appreciate and respect our natural environment.
- For the sheer enjoyment that can be experienced.

Many teams did stress the need for restrictions on when and where people would be allowed to roam on public lands. There was concern for the impacts that people could cause; litter and pollution, soil erosion and compaction, disturbance of wildlife, destruction of plants, and the introduction of exotic invasive species.

Land Judging continued

East Ridge High School FFA Gold Team and Clermont Middle School represented Lake County at the Florida State Land Judging Contest hosted by the Orange Hill Soil and Water Conservation District in Washington County on March 28th.

Mobile Irrigation Lab

During January 1, 2008 to March 31, 2008, the Mobile Irrigation Lab completed sixteen evaluations on agricultural irrigation systems. The systems evaluated had a combined area of 112.2 acres.

The sixteen completed evaluations represent water savings below:

Potential Water Savings (based on first-time evaluations)
 89.6 acre/feet 29,191,260 gallons/year

Actual Water Savings (calculated from follow-up evaluations)
 80.6 acre/feet 26,261,800 gallons/year



On a cold January 3rd morning, the MIL team visited a grove just south of Leesburg after reports of 26 degree weather.

This picture won first place in the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service photo contest and was featured in their Spring 2008 FOCUS newsletter.

MIL Technicians can develop irrigation water management plans specific to your needs.

Call 352-343-2481, ext. 6 to schedule your appointment.

Agricultural Producers

- Voluntary
- Non-regulatory
- Free public service
- Confidential



Wetlands



Wetlands in the United States support nearly 200 species of amphibians, 5,000 plant species, and a third of all native bird species.

About one-half of the 188 animals that are federally designated as endangered or threatened in the U.S. are wetland-dependent. Of these federally listed animals, 17 are bird species or subspecies.

Most freshwater fish depend on wetlands.

Submitted by Kesha Martin, District Conservationist, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

For more information, visit: www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov or the NRCS home web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov

Welcome!

**New
State
Conservationist**



Carlos Suarez started his first day as Florida State Conservationist on March 31. He began his career with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in October 1992. His former position was Deputy State Conservationist for California.

He will be visiting field offices around the state. We look forward to meeting him!

Tree Give-Away



The doors opened at 11:00 a.m. sharp to a line of citizens ready to pick up their free bare-root trees at the Lake County Agriculture Center in Tavares.

The Lake Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with the Florida Division of Forestry, held its annual Tree Give-Away event on January 23rd. The Division of Forestry assisted with purchasing the trees, and County Forester Chris Otremba participated during the event by handing out pine trees and answering questions.

Each person received one tree of each variety: Dogwood, Hickory, Cypress, Green Ash, and Pine. The trees were free, but donations were collected in the amount of \$267.35 and will be used towards next year's event.



Betsy Farner and Frank Paulhamus, Lake Soil and Water Conservation District Board Supervisors (left), handed out tree seedlings as the line moved along in front of the table



Chris Otremba, County Forester, provided slash pine seedlings.

Nadine Foley, Board Supervisor, and Carol Johnson, Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, are shown in the background

Upcoming Events—2008

April (Florida Conservation Month)

- 3 - Lake County Fair (through April 12)
- 23 - Lake Soil & Water Conservation District Meeting - 2:00 p.m.

May

- 11 - Mother's Day
- 26 - Memorial Day
- 28 - Lake Soil & Water Conservation District Meeting - 2:00 p.m.
- 29 - Association of Florida Conservation Districts, Area Four Meeting

June

- 15 - Father's Day
- 25 - Lake Soil & Water Conservation District Meeting - 2:00 p.m.

Newsletter Distribution

The Lake Soil and Water Conservation District Newsletter is available on the web at [lakegovernment.com/Lake Soil & Water](http://lakegovernment.com/LakeSoil&Water). Send an email to:

Patty.Fletcher@fl.nacdnet.net or call **352-343-2481, ext. 6**, and we will add you to our mailing list.

**Lake County Fair
April 3 through 12**

Come by our booth in the
Horticulture Building.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGWET Center at (202) 742-2600 (voice or TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Lake Soil & Water Conservation District
1725 David Walker Dr, Suite C
Tavares, FL 32778