



SEVEN RIVERS

Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc.

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Seven Rivers RC&D and FDC Enterprises Conducts CP-36 Native Grass Establishment Tour

Douglas, GA- August 11, 2008- Seven Rivers RC&D and FDC Enterprises, a native grassland installation company, met with local agencies to demonstrate native grass installation techniques and results on CP-36 (longleaf pine CRP program) projects completed this spring. Attending the tour were employees from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) and Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division. FDC Enterprises, Wildlife Biologist, Tom Schwartz led the tour by explaining the process of establishing native grasses between the rows of longleaf pine and some of the challenges that go along with these projects.

In October 2006, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) unveiled a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Longleaf Pine Initiative. The new CCRP practice CP36 was created to help re-establish longleaf pine and the native ground cover that accompanies this ecosystem. Approximately 60,000 acres of CP-36 were enrolled in middle and south Georgia where there are crop fields best suited for this practice. Under the CP-36 program, the longleaf pines are planted in rows spaced 12 feet apart and the areas between the rows are planted to native grasses. Once established the native grasses provide excellent wildlife habitat and fuel to carry a fire which is the preferred management strategy for long leaf pine stands.

Native grass establishment in Georgia has been occurring for decades however on a much smaller scale and not as a part of this program. With native grass establishment a required component of CP-36 projects there was an obvious need for education on establishing native grasses and for vendors to provide the service. The partnership between Seven Rivers RC&D and FDC Enterprises was established to fulfill both the educational and service demand for native grass establishment. This tour was the first of several to be scheduled this fall and winter. Future field tours will be open to participants of the CP-36 program as well as agency staff and others interested in learning about native grass establishment.

Fred Circle, FDC Enterprises president, said “Over the many years and acres we have planted we have learned that conservation is most effective when locally led. We feel groups such as the Seven Rivers RC&D have the ability to create education and outreach programs for landowners entering into the CP-36 program”. With that thought in mind FDC Enterprises entered into a cooperative partnership with Seven Rivers RC&D to help educate landowners and partner agencies about native grass establishment. Fred Circle added “By partnering with the RC&D we can effectively reach customers and partner agencies and share with them the success and techniques we have learned in the past 6 years. Being able to put on a field tour and getting an excellent turnout of various agency folks is a direct result of this partnership.”

In response to the partnership between FDC Enterprises and Seven Rivers RC&D, John W. Strickland, Chairman of the Seven Rivers RC&D council said, “Public-Private partnerships like these are exactly what we are looking for. It gives us the ability to use our resources to educate the public about conservation and further our mission. We hope by combining efforts we will help in the success of the CP-36 program and other programs in the future.”

Seven Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council was initiated in March of 1992 by a group of local community leaders in Southeast Georgia. The Council was created out of a realization by these individuals of the dire need for communities to collaborate on finding solutions to common problems, learning from unique challenges, and exploiting opportunities. The Council received authorization by the Secretary of Agriculture, in January 1993 and is a 501 (c) (3), not for profit organization. To learn more about Seven Rivers RC&D visit their website at www.sevenriversrcd.org or call 912-367-7679.

FDC Enterprises is a native warm season grass installation company dedicated to offering guaranteed grassland establishment results that are socially acceptable. FDC Enterprises has planted over 88,000 acres of native grasses in 15 states since 2003 and is the only QVM (Quality Vegetation Management) certified grassland installation company in the United States. To learn more about FDC Enterprises visit their website at www.fdcenterprises.com or call 866-270-4833.



Tom Schwartz, Wildlife Biologist for FDC Enterprises demonstrates a successful native grass planting on a CP-36 project.