Choctawhatchee River Soil & Water Conservation District

Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Report

Board of Supervisors

Member	Seat
Cathy Johnson	1
Leonard Thorn	2
Open	3
Ray Jackson	4
Henry Hodges	5

Staff

Employee	Position Title
Mellody Hughes	Office Manager
Trenady Bilbruck	Soil Conservation Technician

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

Employee	Position Title
Chris Menhennett	District Conservationist
Dalton Bodie	Soil Conservationist

The Creation of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts

As a result of the devastation caused by the 1930's Dust Bowl, U.S. Congress declared soil and water conservation a national policy and priority. Over 3,000 local districts across the U.S. were established to address conservation concerns, serving as liaisons between the federal government and local landowners.

Choctawhatchee River Soil and Water Conservation District (CRSWCD) was organized in 1940 under the provisions of the Florida Conservation Act of 1937 and amended by the Soil Conservation Act, F.S. Chapter 582 and is one of the 49 districts established in Florida. Each of these districts are governed by a board of five, elected nonpartisan, unpaid supervisors, who prioritize and aid in the implementation of services offered by our government to our local landowners.

The Mission of Conservation Districts

CRSWCD is responsible for developing and carrying out locally led agricultural programs for the conservation, protection and development of soil, water and related plant and animal resources within the district boundaries.

Services

- Provide technical assistance with conservation planning and best management practice implementation through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) Service
- Provide technical assistance outside of cost-share programs, along with information as requested
- Provide assistance in applying for and implementing cost-share programs through USDA -NRCS

Year in Review

To date 1 new 2026 EQIP contract has been approved, totaling $117,000 on 63 acres.

To date 9 new 2026 CSP applications have been approved, totaling $864,892.00 on 6,317.3 acres.

There are 104 applications for 2027 requesting funding for both EQIP and CSP.

There are currently a total of 57 active EQIP contracts totaling $4,805,426.00 on 11,481.3 acres and 26 active CSP contracts totaling $2,320,746.00 on 14,486 acres. A typical contract is for 2 to 3 years.

Technical assistance was provided to 27 producers/landowners who were not under any contract agreement with NRCS. Technical assistance includes laying out terraces, erosion consultation on agricultural lands and conservation planning.

Information or assistance provided to producers/landowners, not included contract work, by phone or in person a total of 241 individuals, groups or entities.

The Local Working Group meeting was held in May to determine priority areas for EQIP funding in Walton County.

There were 4 meetings of the Choctawhatchee River Soil & Water Conservation District held.

One supervisor and one employee attended the Association of Florida Conservation Districts (AFCD) annual meeting in Gainesville, Florida on August 25, 2026.

Provided financial assistance to Pride of Walton County Cattle Battle, which is dedicated to fostering agricultural experiences and education for our community's youth.

All reports for Choctawhatchee River SWCD were prepared and filed with state and local agencies prior to deadlines.