

CREATION OF MUCKALEE CREEK ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE CENTER

Introduction

Many people in Americus and Sumter County are unaware that the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center is located in Americus, Georgia. The function and purpose of the facility is basically not known. The areas adjacent to the PMC is becoming very urban, however, very little is available for urban landusers, units of government, local schools, technical, colleges and universities.

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (formerly Americus PMC) is part of a national plant materials program operated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The purpose of the Plant Materials Center is to assemble, evaluate and release new plant materials for conservation use.

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center serves Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee and parts of North Florida. These states possess a wide range of climatic and soil conditions.

The Plant Materials Center was established in 1936 to produce planting material, mainly pine seedlings, for use by the CCC Camps and the former SCS demonstration projects. Some of the buildings constructed at that time are still in use. It is located four miles northwest of Americus, Georgia. The site was originally rented, but was purchased by the Federal Government in 1942. The real property holdings at the facility consist of 327.39 acres of land with 15 buildings, an underground irrigation system that covers about 85 acres, a water supply system, and a sewage disposal system. The Center contains several soil types, with Orangeburg predominating. Approximately two-thirds of the land is open for cultivation. Muckalee Creek runs through the southwest corner, furnishing water for irrigation. The Center was operated on contract by the University of Georgia Experiment Stations from 1954 to 1975. NRCS has operated the Center since 1976.

The land area of the plant materials center contains an abundance of natural resources. The natural resources found on the center consist of the following:

- riparian areas
- wetlands
- several soil types
- Muckalee Creek

- bottomland hardwood floodplain
- native plant communities, 80-90 years old
- bay heads and pine forests
- wildlife
- native American historical site
- wetland plants for constructed wetlands
- native plants for urban landscape

Muskalee Creek is one of the major tributaries in Sumter County and for the Flint River. It provides a water source for irrigation for farmers. From an environmental point of view, it is one of the cleaner creeks along the Flint River corridor. In addition, one of the oldest Native American Indian historical sites is found on the plant materials center. There are Native American Indian artifacts that dates back to 7,000 BC or 9,000 years. This site was occupied from 9,000 BC until around 1500 AD.

Objectives

The project, Creation of Muckalee Creek Environmental Resource Center, is being proposed to provide a valuable resource for Americus and Sumter County. The objectives of the Environmental Center are provided below. In addition to the objectives provided it will be accessible to visitors of the center and provide an outdoor study area for teachers and students of Sumter County, undergraduate and faculty study areas for water quality monitoring for Georgia Southwestern University.

- Improve relations and establish a partnership with Sumter County and the City of Americus, Georgia
- Improve the visibility of the plant materials center to urban land users.
- Provide better utilization of federal property
- Provide a resource for customers in urban areas, and for local units of government

Potential Projects

1. Creation of foot trails or nature trails
2. Construct nature trails and boardwalks that go over Muckalee Creek, wetland areas and other wetland ecosystems located in the area.
3. Construct a resource center on the 13 acres that is owned by Georgia Southwestern University.
4. Post signs to highlight native plant communities
5. Establish observation sites for bird watchers
6. Erect nesting boxes for birds and ducks
7. Establish walking and exercise areas that include points of interest at key locations, such as native plants, natural areas, wildlife, and wetlands. It will include rest areas
8. Construct observation points to highlight environmental subjects
9. Plant a native plant demonstration plot for urban landscapes.

Potential Users

Sumter County School System
South Georgia Tech
Georgia South Western
Sumter County Recreation Program
Senior Citizens Council
Lake Collin Subdivision
Sumter County Extension
Southland Academy
USDA - NRCS
Tri-County School System
Native Plant Society

Potential Partners

Sumter County Commission
City of Americus
Sumter County Schools
Sumter County Recreation Department
Habitat for Humanity
Lake Collins Homeowners Association
Georgia Southwestern University
South Georgia Tech
Southland Academy
Lower Chattahoochee S&WCD
USDA - NRCS
Univ. of Georgia
Golden Triangle RC&D
Master Gardeners
Georgia DNR
Environmental Protection Agency
Corps of Engineers
Civic Organizations
Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center

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