

Outreach to Miller County Schools by Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center--Mike Owsley, Jimmy Carter PMC, Americus Georgia

"Attention Environmental Teachers!" Would you be interested in teaching your middle and high school students about environmental and natural resource issues? If so, then the '***Classroom Without Walls***' program may be just what you need. The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service developed this concept for Southwest Georgia. It is designed to teach environmental topics to middle and high school students through a demonstration and lecture approach. The location for the classroom is on private land near Arlington in Early County, Georgia. The site selected for the classroom has excellent examples of upland and wetland habitats that include pond cypress/ black gum savanna and low hammock plant communities.

On April 17 2002, staff from the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Americus, Georgia was invited to participate in this unique outdoor classroom project by the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District and the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission. PMC personnel were part of the project's multi-agency teaching staff. Other outdoor classroom instructors and participants included the Army Corps of Engineers, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division, local NRCS, Jones Ecological Center, and Georgia Forestry Commission. Topics covered by the instructors included water quality, wetlands, soil information, animal identification, and forestry practices. PMC staff presented plant community concepts, plant identification, and plant ecology.

A total of 40 students and their teachers from the Miller County Georgia School system in rural southwest Georgia attended the outdoor classroom. Back in their traditional classrooms, teachers reinforced concepts taught by the various outdoor classroom instructors. Plans are underway to continue the highly successful outdoor program in the fall of 2002 and the spring of 2003.

Any middle or high school system interested in attending the classroom can contact Russell Toning with the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission in Albany Georgia at 229-430-4408, rtonning@gaswcc.org



Instruction on plant community concepts and water quality



Boardwalk into pond cypress and black gum savanna