

Work Continues on Erosion Control Project at the University of Tennessee Martin

The Weakley County Soil Conservation District (WCSCD) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service completed construction of two erosion control structures and the seeding of approximately five acres of a critical use area in a forty acre pasture field adjacent to the chancellor's residence on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM) in the summer of 2003.

This year with Tennessee Department of Agriculture cost share funds another erosion concern in this field was addressed. The Weakley County Soil Conservation District awarded the contract for the construction of a dam-type grade stabilization structure on a gully erosion problem north of the Chancellor's residence.

In 2004, a 500 foot earthen dam was constructed across the eroded area where water from adjacent parking lots, roof tops, and sport fields are concentrating and causing soil material to be washed down to the nearby stream. The dam is 10 feet tall and has 86 feet of 12 inch corrugated aluminum pipe running underneath the dam. This grade stabilization structure will have a temporary pool of water after a rain event, but it will drain down and remain dry during the rest of the year.

This type of structure is an excellent example of current engineering practices being installed by NRCS. Also, this structure, in conjunction with the existing practices, will demonstrate how a cumulative erosion control effort greatly reduces harmful effects of soil erosion and improves water quality.

NRCS utilized UTM equipment for preparing the site and a straw blower for mulching disturbed areas on and around the erosion control structure to ensure a good stand of grass. Overall, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture has contributed nearly \$60,000 for the completion of this 2003-2005 erosion control project. Not only are the erosion control structures helping to alleviate some of the erosion and water quality issues on this farm, but UTM educators have excellent onsite examples of effective conservation methods in West Tennessee.

The Weakley County SCD has received an additional grant of \$30,000 for the installation of a rock lined drainage channel in 2005. Currently NRCS has developed plans to construct the improvement sometime this spring which will control sever gully erosion. The erosion problem is caused by storm runoff from the football field, Ag Complex and related parking lots. The rock lined channel will safely carry runoff to the grade control structure previously installed in 2004. After completion of the 2005 project, UTM will have another valuable on farm practice to utilize as a teaching tool.

