

## **Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District**

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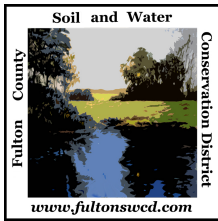
ATLANTA, August 1, 2017 –

The Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to announce it has received a \$50,000.00 grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts to convert underutilized power easements into urban farms within the City of Atlanta. In an effort to reduce food deserts in Atlanta, the District in collaboration with City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Resilience, Groundwork Atlanta, Food Well Alliance, National Resources Conservation Service, and the Georgia Power Company will use these funds to implement Phase 1 (3 acres) of this overall 15-acre initiative by establishing allotment garden food-producing landscapes on three transmission line easements. "This project represents a way for the District to create a new paradigm of urban agriculture, both in Atlanta and throughout the country," explains District Chairman, Alan Toney. "By converting these easements that crisscross the City into food-producing farmland, we should begin to see greater food security within the areas of the City that need it the most."

While many residents have prospered from the City's economic growth, Atlanta still struggles with high unemployment, educational challenges, and food insecurity. A 2015 report shows that 1 in 7.5 people in metro Atlanta and north Georgia turn to food pantries and meal service programs to feed themselves and their families each year. The three selected easements are strategically located to combat these food insecurity challenges. They have been preliminarily identified as the Proctor Creek, Fairburn Heights, and Pomona Park allotments. The success of the project will help to fulfill the City of Atlanta's mission to bring local, healthy food within a half-mile of 75 percent of all residents by 2020.

The Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District was created in 1937 by the Georgia General Assembly to protect the state's soil and water resources following the Dust Bowl of the 1930's. The District promotes sound conservation practices both on construction sites and urban farmland to help protect the natural resources for the one million residences within the county and over ten million downstream neighbors.

Allotment gardening of this size and within this setting is unique to Atlanta and an innovative endeavor for contemporary urban farmers. This grant will enable the District and its partners to provide expertise in agricultural best management practices (cover crops, micro-irrigation, pollinators gardens), erosion and sedimentation control, and techniques necessary to implement a sustainable model on each site. Power easements represent thousands of acres of arable land in Atlanta that are currently not meeting their full



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potential. Once completed, this project will serve to demonstrate how to transform these underutilized areas into a sustainable and viable food-producing resource. With the help of this grant, the District and its partners can significantly decrease food insecurity in three critical areas of Atlanta, establishing a framework for sustainable anti-food desertification work throughout the country.

For more information, visit [www.FultonSWCD.com](http://www.FultonSWCD.com) and [www.nacdnet.org](http://www.nacdnet.org).

Contact: Cory Rayburn

Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District

706-614-9047

[fultoncountyswcd@gmail.com](mailto:fultoncountyswcd@gmail.com)