2ND National Water Quality Trading Conference

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I am John Redding from Monroe, Georgia and I am a supervisor on the Walton County Soil and Water Conservation District. I am also Secretary-Treasurer of the National Association of Conservation Districts. My wife and I own a cotton and peanut farm in Georgia. As a matter of fact we occupy the home I was born in on the day mother and father moved into the home. Obviously I have no problem remembering the date that they moved onto that farm.

Conservation districts are subdivisions of state government and number some 3,000 nationwide. There is almost one in every county and our purpose is to help local people protect and conserve the nation's land, water, forest, wildlife and related resources.

Established under state law and known in various parts of the country as"soil and water conservation districts", "resource conservation districts", "land conservation district", or simply conservation districts, we share a single mission: to work cooperatively with federal, state and other local resource management agencies, as well as private sector interest to provide technical, financial and other assistance to help landowners and operators apply conservation to the landscape.

For nearly 70 years, conservation districts have worked to promote and foster the wise use of soil, water, and related natural resources. Our work has provided the American public with unparalleled benefit in the form of more productive soils, cleaner water and air and healthier fish and wildlife habitat.

One of the key principles by which conservation districts operate is locally led conservation.

Local conservation leaders:

- evaluate resource needs and priorities

- bring people together to find locally crafted solutions to complex natural resource issues

1. Using our locally led, watershed-based model, conservation districts can help promote the concept of water quality credits trading and help educate stakeholders on it value as one of many tools to address water quality issues.

2. To be effective and successful, a water quality credits trading program need to involve a coalition of leader in agriculture, conservation, urban planning and management who share common interest in water quality.
3. This sets the perfect background for conservation districts to bring stakeholders together to establish a local trading network.

4. They can be the driving force in convincing watershed stakeholder and regulatory and non-regulatory agencies to try innovative new approaches and facilitate their involvement in credit trading design and implementation issues.
5. Where watershed circumstances favor trading, it can be a useful tool in the mix of resources to achieve pollutant reduction faster and usually at lower cost than some more traditional approaches.
6. However, trading can be a controversial approach to resource management issues since most of the general public has only a limited understanding—if any—of the concept.
7. We need a solid, science-base outreach effort to help achieve better understanding and acceptance of the concept.
8. Conservation districts are positioned to use our locally led framework to coordinate and facilitate this outreach effort.

These are simply a few of the ways that conservation districts can help to make trading happen.

We believe it's a concept worth exploring and pursuing.