



CM STRIPLING

IRRIGATION RESEARCH PARK

Event and Activity Update

March 2009

This is the first event and activity update using the Stripling Irrigation Park Advisory Committee listserv. The listserv is a database containing all the email addresses of the SIRP advisory committee. To send an email to the entire committee, just send an email SIRPadvcom@listserv.uga.edu. It will then be sent to all the committee members. If you have any questions about how to use the listserv, please contact Niki Newberry at nikinew@uga.edu or at (229)386-3207. There will be a regular update on activities and events at SIRP and a quarterly Research and Policy update from UGA scientists and committee members.

A message from Joe West, Assistant Dean for the UGA Tifton Campus, to the Stripling Irrigation Research Park Advisory Committee

I want to express my appreciation to each of you for your willingness to serve on the Advisory Committee for the Stripling Irrigation Research Park (SIRP). Many of you have served on this committee from the time that the SIRP was merely a dream and were involved in the planning, counsel, leveraging and other activities necessary to make such an ambitious project become a reality. I commend you for your contributions to the beginnings and subsequent successes of the park.

Much has been accomplished since the start of the process. The evolution of the park to where it is today has been rapid, with several examples of irrigation technology in place, advanced instrumentation, a headquarters/office/meeting building, excellent staffing, and research and extension scientists conducting research that has broad application to this region. This is the most focused research and education center in the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. We believe that the research being conducted at the SIRP is crucial for the region. To have a facility with these resources and focus in the face of the challenges facing agriculture today is a testimony to the vision of the people who made the park a reality.

I believe the Advisory Committee is important for several reasons. The Committee can help ensure that the programs conducted at the research park are relevant and have a positive impact

in the region. Your support and influence can benefit the park as scientists pursue research grants. As residents and business people of the region, you are well positioned to communicate to others in the region the work being conducted at the park. State and federal legislation will continue to be developed and your knowledge and advocacy can keep key government officials informed. Your influence may also benefit the park in the future as new initiatives are undertaken, some of which will need funding support.

I am pleased to work with the Advisory Committee as we strive to move the Stripling Irrigation Research Park forward. I thank you for your willingness to be our partners on such a worthy project and for your support and involvement.

A message from Calvin Perry, Superintendent, to the Stripling Irrigation Research Park Advisory Committee

My first experiences with irrigation involved moving solid set pipe and guns to water tobacco fields on our family farm in north Colquitt Co. Needless to say, irrigation technology has advanced much in the last 30 years.

Stripling Irrigation Research Park was developed to "assist farmers in managing irrigation and the general public in understanding the role of water in the economy of the region." I am excited and humbled at the opportunity to lead this facility as we work with scientists and engineers to help our growers become more efficient in their use of irrigation water while educating citizens on the importance of irrigation to our rural economies. There are clearly exciting days ahead for those of us that work on these and related issues. I am proud to work under the direction of Dr. Joe West, Assistant Dean, Tifton Campus, as we try to address the pressing ag water resource issues.

With Dr. West's leadership, the Park has added people and facilities. In 2008, we hired Jay Hathorn as Ag Specialist (full-time) and Heather Hunter as Administrative Assistant (part-time). We had hoped to hire a Research Engineer but this did not work out prior to the current budget situation taking the position off the table. We also hope to be able to move Heather into a full-time position as budgets allow.

In terms of facilities, we are currently in the middle of adding additional offices and lab space at the back of our current office building. This will allow the scientists and engineers from other locations to have space to work on projects, store equipment, etc.

To further our mission, the Park has established relationships with numerous groups including The Nature Conservancy, The Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Georgia Irrigation Association. These relationships are invaluable as we all strive to do cutting-edge work in times of dwindling financial support.

Advisory Committee

From the very beginning of Stripling Irrigation Research Park (SIRP), a citizen advisory committee has been vital to the Park's design, focus, and mission. As the Park has matured into a functioning Research and Education Center with a full slate of research, outreach and education projects, the need for an advisory committee has shifted a bit but remains vital to our continuing success.

We are very excited to have a stellar group of folks agree to serve on SIRP's newly re-constituted advisory committee. The members of the committee include: Bennett Adams (Mitchell Co.), Lucius Atkins (Baker Co.), Lindsay Boring (Baker Co.), John Bridges (Decatur Co.), Murray Campbell (Mitchell Co.), Marty McLendon (Calhoun Co.), Willard Mims (Seminole Co.), Marilyn Royal (Mitchell Co.), Charles Stripling (Mitchell Co.), and Jimmy Webb (Calhoun Co.). These folks represent a cross-section of counties, occupations, and interests in southwest Georgia. The SIRP staff looks forward to a fruitful working relationship with the advisory committee.

2009 Park Activities

2009 has started off with many activities happening at the Park. Some activities were months in planning while others are much shorter in planning (if at all).

- January 13-14: Irrigation Scheduling Workshop with 25 attendees, including vendors.
January 20: Visit by Michele Cable and Malcolm Hodges of The Nature Conservancy.
January 22: Visit by DNR Board member Warren Budd from Newnan.
February 2: Visit by organic farmers Jimmy Hayes and Al Clark, from Statesboro.
February 16: Visit by Charlie Tarver, owner Longleaf Plantation, along with David Reckford and Christi Lambert of The Nature Conservancy.
February 18: Visit by Joe and Dr. Ava Lambert, vet from Canton. Visit by Henry Sullivan, local farmer, interested in accessing weather data.
February 19: SIRP advisory committee meeting and dinner.
February 27: SIRP hosted the Flint River Soil & Water Conservation District board meeting followed by SGRita board meeting. Approximately 35 people were involved in these two meetings.
March 3: Visit by Paul Gupta, president of ILinc and Dr. Samy Loebel of US Funding Corp. Gupta and Loebel were flown in to the Camilla airport by Rick Heard of Farmscan Corp. Rick is working with Calvin to work out issues with the newest version of the Variable-Rate Irrigation (VRI) control system.
March 4: Visit by Woody Hicks and Brian Clayton of the Jones Center. They are interested in soil moisture sensors.

Currently, there are no pre-planned activities scheduled for March at the Park. However, field activities have begun in earnest as corn and vegetable plots are being prepared and winter wheat plots are managed. Soon preparation of cotton and peanut plots will ramp up. This year's annual SIRP Field Day will be held on June 23, 2009.

Stripling Irrigation Research Park Advisory Committee Meeting 2/19/2009

Minutes

- Committee Purpose
 - Murray Campbell:
 - Most of the members have been involved since the beginning,
 - More active during the planning process such as how the park would run.
 - Spent more time as a committee during the formation of the park.
 - For example, flying up to DC and ATL to lobby for funding, etc.
 - Were not as active as they should have been
 - Do not want to be intrusive, but definitely wants to lend advice and time to committee
 - Willing to do whatever the college wants/needs the committee to do

- Joe West
 - Wants to make sure SIRP attacks the relevant issues
 - Influence and support of committee politically when/if SIRP is applying for grants, etc.
- Bob Shulstad
 - Only research park to have advisory committee
 - Advisory committee put in place so farmers from Flint river basin could address the needs and problems
- Committee Structure
 - Lucius Adkins made a motion to draw for term lengths
 - Seconded by Marty McLendon
 - Lucius Adkins made a motion that Charles be a permanent voting member of committee
 - Passed Unanimously
 - Drew Terms
 - Lucius Adkins-2
 - Marty McLendon -2
 - Marilyn Royal-1
 - Lindsay Boring-3
 - Bennett Adams-2
 - John Bridges-1
 - Jimmy Webb-1
 - Murray Campbell-3
 - Willard Mims-3
 - Chairmanship
 - John Bridges nominated Murray Campbell
 - Seconded by Marty McLendon
 - Unanimously approved
 - Vice Chairman
 - Marty McLendon nominated Charles as the standing Vice Chair
 - Murray Campbell Seconded
 - Unanimously approved
 - Newsletter/Updates/Website
 - Suggested by Marty McLendon
 - Supported by Lindsay Boring
 - Charles Stripling suggested a quarterly researched based newsletter and a monthly update
 - Joe West suggested using listserv to communicate with committee members
 - Marilyn Royal thought the monthly calendar and update using listserv would be a great resource, particularly since her job is to market Mitchell County
 - Calvin Perry proposed to update website more regularly.
 - Joe West stated that there is a new OIT person coming on board that can help with SIRP website and he is about to start a planning session for campus websites.
 - Meetings
 - 2 meetings a year
 - Charles Stripling—rotate summer meeting with field day and then a winter meeting in February
- Research and Education Update
 - Calvin Perry

- Sweet Corn Project
 - Rad Yager
 - One of the projects the committee wanted to focus on
 - Collaborative project with Brad Mitchell, Extension agent
 - Corn and Conservation Tillage
 - Subsurface drip irrigation
 - Variable Rate Irrigation
 - John Beasley
 - Irrigated Peanut Acres in Georgia
 - Economic comparison of irrigation application strategies
 - Glen Ritchie
 - Cotton Irrigation Research
 - Drip Irrigation
 - Cotton Variety Growth Dynamics
 - Rad Yager
- Future Needs
 - Research Engineer
 - Internet Access
 - Costs over \$600 a month
 - Marty McLendon and Bennett Adams are involved in SGRITA (wireless internet company)
 - Equipment Needs
- General Discussion and Feedback
 - Charles Stripling
 - July 23-Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership
 - Marilyn Royal is going to be a participant
 - Charles Stripling is a board member of IGEL
 - 32 top people in Environmental Leadership
 - Next formal meeting on Field Day-June 23, 2009.

