



GEORGETOWN SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

**"promoting natural resources conservation through the use of public notification, conservation education,
sound technical information, and direct personal assistance."**

DISTRICT NEWS



New Commissioners

In 2017 the Georgetown Conservation District Board of Commissioners was left with two openings on the Board. After careful consideration these opening were filled with local residents: Dr. Marty Avant and Mr. Jack Whetstone. Both bring substantial knowledge, awareness and experience to the Board.

Dr. Avant is a lifelong resident of Georgetown County. He and his wife Lisa and their two children, Jennings and Jenna Kay, live in the Pleasant Hill area of the county. He operates and manages a large scale hog operation that his late father began in 1989. Today, he is under contract with Smithfield Foods, Inc. as a guilt replacement farm. Dr. Avant was raised on a tobacco farm along the Georgetown/Williamsburg County line and taught the value of farm life and the enjoyment of the great outdoors. Dr. Avant is actively involved with the Georgetown County Parks and Recreation in coaching recreation basketball and baseball. He is employed with the Georgetown County School District and works at Andrews High School as a School Counselor. Dr. Avant also teaches college with the United States Sports Academy.

Jack Whetstone and his wife, Linda, have three children: Ben, John and Leea. They live in Pawleys Island where he is a member, ordained Deacon and Elder of the Pawleys Island Presbyterian Church. Jack is a semi-retired Extension Aquatic Specialist and Associate Professor Emeritus with the Clemson University Department of Forestry and Environmental Conservation and is stationed at the Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science in Georgetown, SC. He was also a member of the SC Sea Grant Extension Program, and is President of Coastal Aquatic & Land Management Inc. and an Environmental Restoration Specialist with Landshore LLC. He has served in the dual role of pond management – aquatic plant management specialist and aquaculture specialist for the diverse South Carolina aquaculture industry for his entire 39 year career.

Meetings

The Georgetown Conservation District Board of Commissioners meets on the third Monday of each month. The meetings are held at 11:00 a.m. in the conference room of the USDA Service Center at 1837 North Fraser Street. The public is invited to attend. For more information, please call the District office at 843- 564-7808 ext. 3. You can access District information on the internet at www.gswcd.com.

No-Till Grain Drills

The District has two no-till grain drills for rent. There is a UFT 6' Grain Drill, that is used for planting pastures, and the District has a Great Plains 10' Grain Drill that can be rented for planting cropland. The UTF drills are located at the farm of Bobby McDaniel. The drills received some needed repairs this year to keep them running. Thanks to Bobby McDaniel for all of his help and assistance maintaining the drills. Rental fees are \$7.00 per acre for the UFT Drill and \$9.00 per acre for the Great Plains Drill. Call the District Office at 546-7808 ext. 3 for more information.

EDUCATION

Essay Contest

The Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District held the annual Essay Contest in 2017. The topic of the contest was "Healthy Soils Are Full of Life." Productive soils are the foundation of any healthy ecosystem. As the world's population grows and the demand for food production increases, it's essential that we work together to protect and enhance our soils.

The winning students were from The Georgetown School of Arts and Sciences. (left to right), Amelia Sargent placed second, Isaac Shumard placed third and Danielle Nixon was the winner in the competition. Their teacher Mrs. Lane Crosby was the winning teacher who submitted the most essays.



Poster Contest

Ms. Miller's third grade class at Pleasant Hill Elementary School won first place in the Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District's 2017 Poster Contest. The topic of the contest was "Healthy Soils Are Full of Life" which helped the students to learn about the many functions of the soil. The class received a pizza party as their prize.



Pee Dee Area Meeting

The Horry SWCD hosted the conservation districts of the Pee Dee at a meeting on September 26. A tour of the L. W. Paul Living History Farm was given prior to the meeting. The farm depicts life in the early 1900s and gives guests the ability to observe activities that were commonplace on traditional family farms. It also has a museum to help educate future generations. The meeting was opened by Rep. Jeff



Johnson who gave an update of current proceedings. Updates from the SC Association of Conservation Districts, SC Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Conservation Service were given at the meeting.

Camp Wildwood

Imagine a place where the energy is contagious, the environment is the beautiful outdoors and the lessons learned are about the impact on the natural environment. There is such a place – Camp Wildwood. It is held at Kings Mountain State Park in June. In 2017 the GSWCD sponsored Sydni Carson Thomas to attend the camp. Sydni said the camp helped her gain confidence and boost her independence. The District offers to sponsor two students to the camp each year. If you would like to attend, contact the district at 546-7808 ext. 3 for information or go to www.campwildwoodsc.com

Camp Wildwood encourages self-reliance, self-discipline and independence in an outdoor setting. It is a place to learn about the diversity of our natural resources and the variety of career choices within the environmental field. 10 – 12 graders may apply.



Photography Contest

Each year the Georgetown Conservation District holds a Photography Contest. All seventh grade students are eligible to enter. Students may enter once in any of the four categories Trees and Plants, Rural Life, Native Wildlife and Landscapes. The winner for 2017 was Emma Rose Radcliff of Waccamaw Middle School.



Scholarships

The Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District works to promote conservation in Georgetown County. One of the best ways to do that is to encourage conservation education. Students who are learning good conservation practices will take them out and use them in their career choices. Each year the Commissioners of the Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District seek to award scholarships to students who are studying

in the fields of conservation and natural resources. The applicants are judged on their grades, community involvement, essay, and career goals. The students chosen this year were: Quincy Gordon, William Babb, Thomas Watson, Jonathan Darling, William Hayslip, and Carl Lester. Vice-Chairman Peggy Williams presented them with their certificates and \$500 scholarships.



STEM

NRCS Staff participated in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) educational event for Georgetown County High School Students at Horry Georgetown Tech. Debbie Mann and Dustin Stoner showed students how to read aerial photos, bored holes to identify soil types see how to use a soil survey and the importance of soil, in both agriculture and development. They also set up surveying levels to show them how to use a grade rod to check elevations and understand the benefits of surveying and the many uses of surveying.

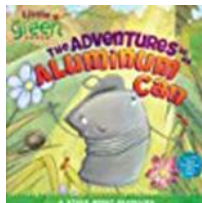


4H Camp



4H sponsors summer camps for 7-14 year old kids. It offers traditional camp activities with plenty of fun, friends and adventure. The activities include swimming and canoeing, high adventure elements and a climbing tower, nature hikes and team sports, archery and riflery, nightly skits and games, dance and talent show and 4H animals. It is held at Camp Bob Cooper in Summerton and Camp Long in Aiken. The District will sponsor interested students to attend. In 2017, 4H students Breanna Carline and Ay'Shona Coffield were sponsored to attend.

Earth Day



In observance of Earth Day, April 22, the Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District donated three books to the Andrews Elementary School Library from the new “green” book series. Little Green Books educate children on what they can do to be more eco-friendly. The books in this line are made from recycled materials, and the theme of the books was recycling. Also a big book on Mysteries in the Soil was given to the library. It gives great information about the soil and it features large photos which capture the students' attention. It is great for lower school and it is written in two languages.

Wildlife Career Development Event

In February, the District helped to sponsor the Future Farmers of America, Wildlife Career Development Competition which hosted over 200 students from around the state. The competition is among the most scientifically challenging of all the events conducted by the SC FFA

Organization. Preparation requires considerable study and practice in the classroom and outdoor settings. The event was conducted by faculty of the Forestry Management Technology Program of Horry-Georgetown Technical College. FFA teams from high schools across South Carolina competed for the title of State Champion. The competition included both

hands-on practical exam questions about animal skins, skulls, management

tools and a written exam. Natural resource professionals were in attendance to talk to students about careers.

Professor James Westerhold, who teaches wildlife management at HGTC, said, “This is a great opportunity for young people to share their career goals or explore job options in natural resource management.”



Aim-At-Ag Competition

On September 30, the Georgetown District sponsored local student, Lane Phillips to participate in the Aim-At-Ag sporting clays competition which was held at Back Woods Quail Club. The event was presented by ArborOne Farm Credit and is a fund raiser for state and local FFA and 4H chapters. The exciting sport of sporting clays is growing rapidly. It allows youth to learn about the safe handling and use of firearms, self-discipline and a love for the outdoors.





FFA Convention and Camp



The Georgetown SWCD has been actively assisting with local FFA teams in an effort to promote agricultural education. Carver's Bay High School has a new FFA Teacher, Rose Jordan. Georgetown High School also has a new FFA teacher, Cody Floyd. The District is assisting the newly formed teams as they get established. The District helped the Carvers Bay FFA to attend the FFA State Convention and FFA Camp. They also helped to purchase FFA jackets for the team.

FFA Field Day

15 FFA Students from Rose Jordan's class at Carvers Bay High School had a field day at the farm of Kyle Daniels on December 8. Sudie Thomas, Biologist with NRCS used the woods as the classroom to teach the students about native plants and their value to wildlife and insects. Keith Brown with American Forest Management discussed forest/timber management. Kyle Daniel - FSA, Debbie Mann and Dustin Stoner - NRCS, Grant Lyerly -ArborOne Farm Credit, and Keith Brown - American Forest Management shared information about farm programs and opportunities in all areas of agriculture as well as forest management and conservation.



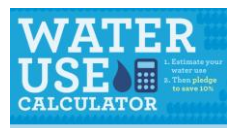
Cover Crop Workshop

On March 8, 2017 the Georgetown Conservation District hosted a cover crop workshop. The workshop helped demonstrate the benefits of using cover crops and how they protect and improve the soil. The workshop featured speakers Buzz Kloot, Carl Coleman, Rupert Burrows and Jeff Lucas who addressed weed control, herbicide management, farming with cover crops and making cover crops pay. A demonstration of DNR's rainfall simulator displayed the amount of water that is retained by cover crops. With over fifty in attendance, the workshop was very successful.



Water Use Calculator

The Southwest Florida Water Management District has a webpage which focuses on conservation materials for communities and businesses. Water conservation is a key link between balancing current and future water needs. Would you like to estimate your daily water use? Go to <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/conservation/thepowerof10/> and answer a few questions to estimate how much water you use in a day, week, month or year. It may surprise you.



CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Conservation Technical Assistance CTA - Although the CTA program does not include financial or cost-share assistance, clients may develop conservation plans, which may serve as a springboard for those interested in participating in USDA financial assistance programs.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP offers cost share for implementing conservation practices which help with water quality, soil health, water conservation, and livestock management. Practices include, but are not limited to: conservation tillage, nutrient management, cover crops, livestock water, fencing and pasture management. Assistance is also available to specialty crop producers including vegetables. In 2017 funding was approved for 13 new contracts covering 876 acres.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program ACEP - The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program provided financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easement component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easement component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands. Georgetown currently has 7 WRP easements and one (FRPP) Farm and Ranchland easement.

Conservation Stewardship Program - CSP offers incentives based on current conservation activities and accomplishments and also requires producers to enhance their operations with additional conservation practices to improve and protect natural resources, predominately soil and water quality, and forest wildlife habitat benefits for cropland, pasture, and forestland. Currently Georgetown has 40 active contracts covering 35,356 acres and 10 new contracts were approved in 2017.

Georgetown Conservation District Commissioners

Mark Johnson., Chairman
Peggy Williams, Vice-Chairman
Morris Johnson, Sec./Treasurer
Jack Whetstone
Marty Avant

Associate Commissioners

Elery L, Little
Kenny Williams
Truitt Owens

Staff

Denise Smith, District Coordinator
Debbie Mann, District Conservationist, NRCS
Dustin Stoner, Soil Conservationist, NRCS

Our Year in Pictures



Our 2017 Affiliate Members

The Georgetown Soil & Water Conservation District would like to recognize our Affiliate Members who are a vital part of our conservation team. Without the monetary support given by the Affiliates, we would not be able to carry out the many programs to promote conservation stewardship within the county. The Conservation District is committed to helping the landowners and educating the students of Georgetown County.

Thank You Affiliates!!

Regular Membership

Truitt Owens
W. Sherwyn Jacobs
Lonnie & Debra Creel
Samuel O. Cribb
Capps Farm
Southern Coastal Cable
Bob P. Cribb
Martin L. Owens
Kyle & Jodi Daniel
Wardie & Sybil Collins
Chicora Wood Plantation
Rubeth Earl & Patsy R. Williams
Austin Beard
Harry Butler Jr.

Sustaining Membership

Town of Pawleys Island
Anna Kate & Hayne Hipp
Prevatte & Associates, Forest & Land Consultants
Dr. & Mrs. Wallace Vaught – Hobonny Fields Farm
Santee Cooper
Lumpkin & Postal, P.C.
China Grove Plantation

Supporting Membership

D. I. Wilson
Gray Lady at Pawleys Island
H. E. Hemingway
John R. Beahrs
Legrand Owens
Charles C. King
Fred R. & Janice Powell
Annandale Plantation
Black River Plantation LP
Meher Spiritual Center

Endowing Membership

Bob & Mary Roberts
S2 Farms LLC
Charles Ingram Lumber Co., Inc.
Mt. Pleasant Plantation, LLC

