



GEORGETOWN SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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

DISTRICT NEWS

Commissioner Wayne Avant



The Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District Board lost a dedicated commissioner in February 2016. Wayne Avant was known in the community for his dedication to his God, his family and his community. He only missed a meeting if there was work on the farm that he could not leave, which usually involved his swine facility. Wayne also cared about the land and conservation, over the years he improved his own farm with improvements in his swine facility and pasture management improvements with cross fencing and

watering facility to improve rotational grazing with his cow/calf herd. Those who knew Wayne also knew of his love of the Jail Bird Shriners, sports, Black River, just to name a few things, and he had an exceptional talent to be able to build and weld anything, he would take something as simple as a gate lock and improve it to make it more functional. Wayne will be missed by the Conservation District but will never be forgotten for the contributions that he made.

Flood of 2015

When the rain started on Friday, October 2, no one could have imagined by Monday morning Georgetown County would receive 21 inches of rain over a four day period. While the rain subsided on Monday, the rain was just the beginning of what would impact communities in the county. Along with the many who were devastated by the flooding of their homes, the farmers of South Carolina were also greatly affected by the excessive rainfall received over the weekend. Crops such as soybeans, cotton and peanuts were all damaged to the point where they were simply left unharvested in the field. Furthermore, livestock and baled hay were impacted by flooded fields. Although the largest amount of rain fell during the four day period, the rain continued to fall on a weekly basis. The saturated fields held farmers at bay from harvesting any of their crops even though many attempts were made to do so. By the time they were able to harvest any of the crops, the damage to the quality of the standing crop was to the point where it was unmarketable. The water destroyed the cotton fields as well deteriorating the lint to where it too had no grade or graded so poorly it was of no benefit.

However, along with the individuals and communities in Georgetown who pulled together to clean up and rebuild, so have the farmers. As soon as the farmers were able, they were back in the field getting ready for a new season. They started preparing fields and planting crops in hopes of a successful harvest come fall.

To be a farmer these days you must be a jack of all trades. A farmer is an agronomist, an accountant, a marketing specialist, a mechanic, a father, and a dreamer but most of all, a candidate of hope. He puts investments of time, money, and hard work with the hope to get a return and make a living.



A farmer is also someone who is not afraid of a lot of hard work, and has a passion for the land he or she holds dear. Farmers know firsthand the need to protect our natural resources and conserve the land. This is how they make their living. So as you drive through the countryside, see the fields, and sit at the dinner table, don't forget to thank a farmer.

New Commissioner and Soil Conservationist



In the general election of 2014, a new Conservation District Commissioner was elected, Morris Johnson. New commissioner Morris Johnson was sworn in at SCACD conference in January with all of the new commissioners from the state. Mr. Johnson is retired from International Paper. He is a past county council member and a strong participant in charitable work



and helping in the community. The Natural Resources Conservation Service welcomed Soil Conservationist, Alva "Tripp" Williamson to the Georgetown office. Tripp, who is a native of Kingstree, SC, comes to NRCS from the Edisto Research and Education Center. He attended Clemson University where he received a degree in Agricultural Mechanization and Business.

No-Till Grain Drills



The District has two no-till grain drills for rent. Along with the UFT Grain Drill, that is used for planting pastures, the District has a Great Plains 10' Grain Drill that can be rented for planting cropland. Both drills are located at the Munnerlyn Farm in the Rose Hill Section of Georgetown County. The drills received some needed repairs this year to keep them running. We appreciate the help of Joey McCants, Teddy Bishop and Eddie Munnerlyn for their assistance with 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.

Pee Dee Area Meeting

On October 13 the Florence SWCD hosted the Pee Dee Area Meeting in Lake City. The event began with a tour of the Jones Carter Gallery showing a collection of American Landscapes featuring the National Parks. The meeting, which was held at the historical Bean Market, featured the details of the construction of a new lake in Lake City. The eight acre lake is already under construction and will be surrounded by a park that will include a walkway around the lake, bridge to the island in the lake, a picnic area, and play area for the children. Speakers included, Florence SWCD Chairwoman, Sterling Sadler, Lake City Mayor Loveth Anderson, and DNR representatives.



Yawkey South Island Tour

The Yawkey Wildlife Center consists of North and South Island and most of Cat Island. The Center is dedicated as a wildlife preserve, research area, and waterfowl refuge. Visitors must ferry across the Intercoastal Waterway at present but the construction of a swing bridge is in progress to allow larger tour groups. The District Commissioners and staff took a tour of the property with its beautiful scenic views. They also got to see Tom Yawkey's trophy room and observed a rare plant that can only be found on the island. Tom Yawkey owned the Boston Red Sox and allowed baseball legends like Ty Cobb to hunt and vacation on the island.



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.

New and Beginning Farmer Classes

The district sponsored local resident, Leslie Dean, to attend Clemson University's SC New and Beginning Farmer Program in October and November of 2015. The program elements included comprehensive agribusiness training, business concepts and business plan development. The classes allowed farmers to network with other new and beginning farmers. They were held at the Sandhill REC facility in Columbia.

EDUCATION

Essay Contest

The Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District held the annual Essay Contest in 2015. The contest was open to all students in the sixth grade. The topic of the contest was "Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Pollinators". The students' essays investigated the many kinds of pollinators and their importance. The winners of the competition receiving a certificate and cash prize were Anna Bird (on right) and 2nd place was Morgan Allison (on left). The Teacher who submitted the Most Essays was Ms. Kristi Kibler. All are from Waccamaw Intermediate School. Chairman Mickey Lankford presented the winners with their awards.



Poster Contest



The District sponsors an annual Poster Contest for third grade students. The posters are submitted as a class project and the winning class receives pizza or ice cream for a party. The theme of the 2015 contest was "Local Heroes- Your Hardworking Pollinators" which helped the students to learn about the many kinds of pollinators and how important they are for food production.

The winning class was Mrs. Stone's class at Pleasant Hill Elementary.

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. The District offers to sponsor two students to the camp each year. If you would like to attend, contact the district at 354-9621 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 given and submit photos before the deadline. The winner for 2015 was Lane Phillips from Rosemary Middle School. He won first place in all four categories: Landscapes, Native Wildlife, Trees and Plants, and Rural Life.



Rain barrels



As part of the 319 Grant, the District partnered with Georgetown County to make 100 rain barrels. The rain barrels were used with the Georgetown County stormwater pollution prevention program. They were offered to residents in the Pawleys watershed region. Household hazardous waste cleanup days are scheduled twice a year (in the fall and spring) to allow residents to drop off old paints, solvents, pesticides, fertilizers and batteries. As an incentive, the rain barrels are offered to residents who drop off five or more items. Forty to fifty barrels are normally given away at these events. They are also used to educate children through several summer camp programs and during the annual Earth Day events. The kids are challenged to come up with a theme and paint the barrels. "They have proven to be an integral part of our educational program and a great way to promote the importance of rain water harvesting" said Tim Chatman of Georgetown County Public Works.

AMI Kids Garden



The Conservation District funded a garden for the AMI Kids School of Georgetown again in 2015. The District provided gardening equipment and plants to help the students to plant the garden on the school grounds. The students were responsible for planting and maintaining the garden. It is a great learning experience for them, many of which have never grown vegetables before. The AMI School provides education and essential life skills for kids who have been on the wrong path and need a helping hand for that first step in the right direction. It gives students help in becoming responsible and productive citizens.

Summer Science Retreat



The 4H organization held a three day summer science camp at Clemson University. The students studied research with DNR, bacteria, antibiotics, and supercomputers. They also took a campus tour and enjoyed some local activities. The District sponsored local student Caleb Vereen, who is a 10th grade student from Carver's Bay High School, to attend. It was an excellent opportunity to experience hands-on science and research with high school students from across the state. Caleb plans to become a forensic scientist.



Scholarships



In 2015 the Georgetown Conservation District awarded 5 scholarships to students at Horry Georgetown Technical College studying Forestry and Wildlife Management. The recipients must be at least second semester students in conservation and natural resources related fields. The recipients were Lauren Booth, Matthew Strever, Paul Fraser Mosley, Nolen Matthew Tuten, and Alden Trent Crapps. They are pictured here with Chairman Mickey Lankford (left) and Professor Deanna Ruth (right).

Careers Day



On May 12 & 26 Career Day was held at Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge and Environmental Education Center. NRCS staff Debbie Mann and Tripp Williamson were among those who gave presentations. They provided information on soils to the students who were from Browns Ferry Elementary and Coastal Montessori School. The students were very attentive and eager to learn by asking many questions. The students



rotated through the stations to hear each speaker.

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 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 at Camp Long in Aiken. The District will help sponsor interested students to attend.



FFA Competition



In February, the District helped sponsor the FFA 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."

Earth Day



In an effort to help educate local students, the Conservation District provided fun and educational material for Earth Day, which is celebrated on April 22. A pollinator big book (13.5" x19.5") was given to the library at Pleasant Hill Elementary on Earth Day. It features large photos to show the importance of pollinators to everyone and grasps the student's attention. It is great for lower school students and is printed in two languages.

Without water the earth would look like the moon.



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 2015 funding was approved for 12 new contracts covering 622 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.

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 26 active contracts covering 27,544 acres and 18 new contracts were approved in 2015.

Georgetown Conservation District Commissioners

Mickey D. Lankford, Jr., Chairman

Mark Johnson, Vice Chairman

Peggy Williams, Sec./Treasurer

Morris Johnson

Nathaniel Ruth

Associate Commissioners

Elery L. Little

Kenny Williams

Truitt Owens

Staff

Denise Smith, District Coordinator

Debbie Mann, District Conservationist,
NRCS

Our Year in Pictures



Our 2015 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

Kyle & Jodi Daniel
Truitt Owens
W. Sherwyn Jacobs, ATTY.
Lonnie & Debra Creel
Tony R. Baxley
Bob P. Cribb
Harry J. Butler Jr.
Rubeth Earl & Patsy R. Williams
Gray Lady at Pawley's Island
Capps Farm
Ron Charlton
Samuel O. Cribb

Supporting Membership

Legrand Owens
Annandale Plantation
The Oaks Plantation
Fred R. & Janice Powell
Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Hughes
Charles C. King
Martin Owens
F Preston Wilson
Black River Plantation LP

Sustaining Membership

Mossdale Plantation
Bob Roberts
The Belle W. Baruch Foundation
Anna Kate & Hayne Hipp
Robert L. Lumpkin, Jr., P.C.
Wallace & Mary Caroline Vaught – Hobonny Fields Farm
Clermont Plantation
Town of Pawleys Island
Santee Cooper
Low Country Forest Products

Endowing Membership

Charles Ingram Lumber Co., Inc.
S2 Farms LLC
Mt. Pleasant Plantation
Weehaw Plantation

1837 North Fraser Street
Georgetown, SC 29440

