ANNUAL REPORT

Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District
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www.greenvillesoilandwater.com
A Message from the Chairman

As I write this a thick haze has obscured the normal clear day view of the Blue Ridge Escarpment. Greenville County, along with much of the southern Appalachian region is suffering from a prolonged drought, and the dry conditions have allowed many wildfires to breakout. This brings to bear how meaningful our work to protect and conserve soil and water resources is. Working with land owners and promoting conservation practices is what we do, in concert with federal and state partners.

This fall two commissioners have decided to pursue other interests. Claire Bradberry has served as an appointed commissioner since 2008 and was the Commission’s Vice-Chairman. Her insights and thoughtful deliberations have benefited the District and are greatly appreciated. Ed Nabors decided not to seek another term of office. Eddie’s experiences gave him different insight and ideas into the commission’s deliberations. Both Claire and Ed will be missed. We welcome two new commissioners, one appointed and one elected, this year.

The Commission continues to benefit from an exceptional staff. From conservation workshops, to successful grant applications and administration, watershed activities, and stormwater education, the District staff has successfully carried out and furthered the mission of conservation in Greenville County. We were proud to have our education staff invited to make two presentations at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts early this year in Reno, Nevada. Lynn and Maddi presented sessions: “Wait…What? How to Maximize Your Message” and “Extend Your Outreach with Partnerships: Local, Regional, and National” that were very well received by conservation district attendees from all over the US.

Looking ahead, our District along with the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts is hosting the Southeast National Association of Conservation Districts meeting in 2017. This meeting will bring conservation leaders from nine southeastern states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to Greenville. In addition to nationally recognized attractions, the Greenville District is planning several tours and presentations that will demonstrate our commitment to ‘putting conservation practices on the ground.’

As always, you are welcome to any Commission meeting (usually held on the second Tuesday of the month). You also can keep up with us on Facebook and our district website.

Yours in conservation,

Rob Hanley
Chair

From Our District Manager

It’s been another great year for the District! Our year has been filled with a lot of grant activity and big workshops. Here is a summary of each of the big projects we have been working on.

Conservation Innovation Grant - The District-sponsored NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant at Pecan Dale Farmstead ended this year after three years of hard work. The grant was a great success in teaching farmers to work with nature instead of against it. Experiments in grading and forage management to offset drought brought the farm through the drought this past summer with plenty of forage to spare. Hundreds of people toured the farm over the three years, and one other method of outreach was the genesis of the ReGenerative Grazing Group on Facebook. In just one year, the page that provides technical advice for farmers learning to manage extensive intensive grazing garnered over 400 participants from six continents! Some of the most knowledgeable people in Management Intensive Grazing chimed in to give advice to people who have questions. Come join us if you are interested!

Huff 319 – This grant involves using DHEC/USEPA funds to repair septic tanks in the Huff watershed. The District took the lead on this on behalf of the Reedy River Water Quality Group. (The Huff watershed is within the Reedy watershed.) Several septic systems have been repaired to keep septic contents that surface from running into nearby rivers, posing a public health threat. We are currently in our second year of the grant cycle.

Legacy City Farm – Some exciting news for this year is that the District was awarded a $50,000 grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts to start a farm in downtown Greenville. The grant is to provide a learning center for small farmers on conservation techniques as well as provide food for Legacy Charter School, which is in a food desert: Part of Legacy’s charter is to serve healthy food and provide exercise for the students every day, so this project is a natural fit for them. The Legacy City Farm is starting as a 6-acre kudzu-covered lot and is expected to start furnishing food for the school next spring.

State Watershed Board Meeting – The Greenville District is one of several Districts in the Upstate that maintains dams that were built by NRCS in the 1960s through 1980s. With the flooding in the Columbia area last year fresh on our minds, the District hosted a day-long workshop that included representatives from the National Watershed Coalition, the DHEC Dam Division, NRCS, and a water rights attorney. Participants learned about the history, maintenance, regulations, and support network. Everyone left with more knowledge of the responsibilities of maintenance of these dams.

Pasture Management Workshops – The District worked with NRCS and Clemson Extension to provide quarterly workshops on pasture management as well as other topics of interest to area farmers. In addition, the District hosted a day-long workshop on Management Intensive Grazing including great speakers, a free lunch, door-prizes, and a farm tour.

Looking forward to another great year to come!
In Greenville County and Beyond...

- Education total reach for the year was 2,073,285 citizens.
- Over 37,400 members of the public stopped by educational booths including Duck Derby, iMAGINE Upstate, Southern Home and Garden Show, Earth Day Fair at McAlister-Stribeck (x2), Get Out Greenville, and Park Hop.
- Education Staff made twelve appearances on Your Carolina, teaching about conservation issues, stormwater pollutants, and our campaigns.
- Maddi and Lynn hosted a radio show called Saturday Splash on 94.5 WGRK.
- A one hour conservation-themed weekday morning discussion show.
- 300 UAF campaign gift bags were distributed to local car shows with educational information.
- Staff implemented the “Trash Bag Challenge” asking community members to collect bags of trash. Over 50 people participated in the two inaugural months.
- Education staff presented two programs at the NACD annual conference in Reno, NV.
- US outreach totals over 1.7 million people. Our Poop Fairy campaign is now seen in 6 states.

School Programs

- With GCSWCD assistance, Slater-Marietta Elementary School continued Trout in the Classroom project and trout release.
- Five mini-grants were awarded this spring, supporting soil erosion elimination, school garden irrigation, a biochar study and water quality monitoring.
- Our annual essay contest had 304 entries from 9 schools. Twelve winners were chosen from grades 5 through 8.
- Education Staff made presentations at 12 schools, teaching 1060+ children about pollution prevention. An additional 600 students were taught about how they contribute to keeping our water clean with the “Toss Your Trash” program at Party for the Planet at the Greenville Zoo.
- A 12 week intensive seminar program was taught at Next High School for 16 students.
- A set of Yucky Ducky Arcade games was given to Greater Greenville Sanitation to tour with Waste Lab.

In the Community

- 72 Scoop the Poop signs, 300 Poop Fairy Bags, 375 pet waste bag key chains, and over 900 rack cards were distributed to various entities at the request of county citizens.
- A Suburban was purchased and wrapped with promotional messaging featuring the Poop Fairy and Tucky Ducky campaigns, which impacted approximately 140,020 citizens. More importantly, this was a conversation starter everywhere we went. We were able to have in-depth one-on-one conversations about our campaigns.
- The Spring Cleaning Community Yard Sale was held on March 26-24 tables were sold to community members wishing to sell items and about 450 people attended. Stormwater and conservation information was distributed to all.
- We partnered with Greenville Evening Rotary on the Duck Derby event, reaching over 7,000 people with messaging on stormwater pollutants.
- Our largest event this year was the iMAGINE Upstate festival for STEM/STEAM education.
- Education Staff made presentations at 7 HOAs and community groups educating on stormwater pollutants, reaching 220 participants.

Education Programs for County Residents

EDUCATION CONTESTS FOR GREENVILLE COUNTY STUDENTS

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST
Open to students K-12
Begin September 1, Entry Deadline November 18, 2016
The photography contest has four categories:
- We All Need Trees - Anything tree related. Leaves, branches, fruit, a single tree, or a forest
- Agriculture and Food - Photos of farm animals, crops in the field or on the table, people working in farm fields, farm equipment, old barns, and buildings
- Focus on Water - Anything water related including local rivers, lakes, streams, and the animals that inhabit them
- We Live on the Land - This can include landscapes, scenery, soil or animals that live on the land
$50 prize for each category winner, $100 Best in Show.
For more information, visit www.GreenvilleSoilandWater.com

ESSAY CONTEST
Open to students 5th-8th Grades
Entry Deadline March 17, 2017
The 2016 essay contest theme: Healthy Soils are Full of Life
Three $50 prizes for each grade with a special gift for teachers of winners.
For more information, visit www.GreenvilleSoilandWater.com

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

All education programs are adjusted for the appropriate age group and are great for students, camps, homeowner associations or other interested groups.

STORMWATER/WATER CYCLE/POLLUTANTS
Covers the whole water cycle, definition of stormwater, and what can pollute our waterways. Participants learn what they can do to keep our rivers, lakes, and streams clean for future generations!

GENERAL YUCKY DUCKY VISIT
In addition to the learning about stormwater (see program above), participants will enjoy an entertaining visit with the GCSWCD Stormwater Mascot, General Yucky Ducky. General Yucky Ducky is a 7’ tall devil duck and is always a hit!

CONNECTING KIDS TO THE LAND
How did that apple get into your lunch box? Where does our food come from? Participants learn food facts, what crops are grown in SC, agriculture basics, and how familiar food items are created. They’ll learn what foods come from animals or from plants and what sustainability means to our food supply.

LET’S GET WET!
In addition to the learning about stormwater (see program above), participants will enjoy an entertaining visit with the GCSWCD Stormwater Mascot, General Yucky Ducky. General Yucky Ducky is a 7’ tall devil duck and is always a hit!

LET’S GET WILD!
Participants learn about wildlife with Project WILD activities. Project WILD is one of the most widely-used conservation and environmental education programs. Actual fur pelts and skulls and scat replicas facilitate questions and answers. Participants learn about local animals with the help of educational puppets.
I’d like to take a moment to thank and recognize the dedicated individuals and organizations who have played a significant role in the community outreach efforts of the Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District (GCSWCD) over the past year. Your contributions have been invaluable in promoting environmental stewardship and raising awareness about water quality and conservation practices.

Community Outreach

GCSWCD staff members serve on the Public Outreach Committee for the Reedy River Water Quality Group, a consortium of government agencies, universities, and community partners aimed at protecting the Reedy River.

Trash and Litter

GCSWCD launched the “Hey Greenville, You Dropped This!” campaign to educate on litter as a water pollutant. The crown jewel of this campaign is a large, modular trash “wall” – 9 moveable, stackable, fillable clear boxes that can be filled with litter and constructed into a wall. Imagine the impact of a 4-foot tall child standing next to an 8-foot tall wall built out of litter picked up off the streets of Greenville! The “trash wall” was showcased at IMAGINE Upstate and Greenville Rec’s Get Out Greenville this year and started a productive conversation about doing our part to reduce litter. We hosted our first CITO (Cache In, Trash Out) clean-up in conjunction with Keep Greenville County Beautiful and the County Litter Task Force. The District sponsored the Monaghan neighborhood HOG Day neighborhood clean-up. We also rolled out the Trash Bag Challenge based on a program started by Save Our Saluda. The challenge is to fill up one kitchen trash bag of litter, send us your pictures, and we send a prize to say thank you! Have you been challenged yet?

We hosted our first Spring Cleaning Community Yard Sale to encourage citizens to rehome their unwanted goods instead of putting them to the curb or taking them to the landfill. Thanks to Greenville Rec for supporting this event!

Pet Waste

While I don’t enjoy pet waste, I do enjoy the pets that create it. We attended such cuddly, fluffy events as Rec’s Waggin’ at the Waterpark, Astro Kennel’s Pet Wellness Day, Greenville Humane Society’s Muff Stuff, and others. We also supported Animal Care’s Tails and Trails 5k and the Citizens for Fluffy events as Rec’s Waggin’ at the Waterpark, Astro Kennel’s Pet Wellness Day, and the Reedy River.

By the Numbers

Youth Development

2015/16 brought us in and out of the classroom to reach Greenville’s youth. Maddi’s new water cycle program made a splash with elementary and middle school students across the County as they travel through the journey of a raindrop including how it cycles around the Earth and moves through a watershed. The Yucky Ducky Arcade made an appearance at the Swamp Rabbit Education Day at the Bon Secours Wellness Arena. Staff also serve as mentors for Green Steps Schools, a student-driven project-based program bringing conservation into the schools. Highlights include Trout in the Classroom, butterfly houses, and a solar-powered chicken coop! Maddi also led a 12-week seminar at NEXT High School called The Earth Complex; an introduction to the intricate relationships between Earth, man, and nature.

This year was our second annual Wet and Wild Summer Camp in conjunction with Greenville County 4H. We hosted 30 kids ages 6-14 for a week-long camp about all things wet and wild! We love seeing kids learning in nature and watching attitudes change from “kill the bug!” on day one to “put the bug under a microscope, draw it, learn everything about it, and become its best friend” by the end of the week.

Conference, Workshops, and Trainings

Staff received national recognition by the National Association of Conservation Districts for our successful “Wait- What!” marketing campaigns and a streambank restoration project at the Long Branch Baptist Church and were invited to present at the national conference in Reno, NV.

Maddi and Lynn continue to serve at State Coordinators for Project WET and hosted the 2016 USA Coordinator’s conference here in Greenville! They also presented on Project WET SC at the Environmental Educators of South Carolina annual conference in Congaree, SC and at the South Carolina Marine Educators Conference in Greenville, SC.

Maddi is now certified in Adopt-A-Stream, Project WILD, Project WILD Aquatic and as a TreesGreenville Community Tree Keeper.

Media

Maddi and Lynn became radio stars with the launch of Saturday Splash, a weekly conservation talk show on 94.5 WGTK The Answer. From gardening to special places to sustainably brewed beer, Saturday Splash brings listeners a little splash of living green. Listen to past episodes at SaturdaySplash.com! We also continued to host regular segments of Conservation Conversation on Your Carolina, a local morning TV show.

Looking Ahead

2016/17 promises to continue to bring much excitement and joy to the District! We are patiently awaiting the creation of a 3D watershed model of Greenville County, and we are working with several area groups to install educational signs in parks and along the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail. Keep up with what’s going on at the District with our quarterly newsletters, our Facebook page, and our website at GreenvilleSoilandWater.com.

By the Numbers

Community Outreach
Affiliate Membership

Since 1971, citizens, businesses, and educational institutions in Greenville County have donated tax deductible gifts to the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District. The District uses affiliate member funds to provide a wide variety of environmental education programs, demonstration projects, and outdoor learning opportunities.

District education programs reach students of all ages, classroom teachers, informal educators, pet owners, homeowners, farmers, contractors, members of the public, and elected officials.

We need your help to continue these important programs!

- Awards for Greenville County students for photographs, science projects, and essays written on natural resource conservation topics
- Sponsorship of high school students to attend Envirothon and Governors’ Institute for Natural Resource Education
- Workshops for educators in Project WILD, Project WET and Project FLP (Food, Land, People)
- Classroom programs for Greenville County schools, reaching hundreds of students each year
- Interactive exhibit displays at area events, fairs, and Earth Day celebrations
- Funding for Outdoor Learning Centers, community rain garden projects, and interactive learning activities
- Funding for mini-grants to schools and organizations for conservation education

A Heartfelt Thank You To Our Affiliate Members

**Partners**
- South Carolina DNR
- Clemson University
- Kilwins
- ReWa - Renewable Water Resources

**Leaders**
- Strange Brothers Grading Company, Inc.
- Darrell & Georgia Harrison
- AgSouth Farm Credit
- Caliber Engineering Consultants, LLC
- Darrell & Georgia Harrison
- Hyatt Regency Greenville
- McCall Environmental, PA

**Supporters**
- Mountain View Farm
- Nature Wild Photography
- Pecan Dale Farmstead
- Padula’s Plants and Gardens
- Pecan Dale Farmstead
- Bob & Claire Bradbery
- Sean & Sallie Dogan
- Dr. David L. Hargett
- Howard Farms
- Dr. Walter McPhail
- John W. Parris
- Paul Wickersimer
- Dennis and Judy DeFrancisco
- William N. Greisette, Jr.
- Danny & Nan Howard

**Contributors**
- Grady & Mary Rose Jones
- North Greenville University
- Gary & Fran Richardson
- Sprague & Sprague Consulting Engineers

**Gala Sponsors**
- 3 Dog Pet Supply
- Jody Childs
- The Commerce Club
- Upcountry History Museum
- Louis Holloway
- Hyatt Regency Greenville
- South Carolina DNR
- Keep Greenville County Beautiful
- Kilwins Greenville
- Keep Greenville County Beautiful
- Michelin North America
- Greenville Zoo
- Southern Heritage Nursery
- Embassy Suites
- Summit Media
- Greenville County
- Summitt Media
- Tuscany Honey
- WSPA
- Upstate Forever/B-Cycle
- Vom Fass

And Sponsors For Their Generous Support

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- Workshops for educators in Project WILD, Project WET and Project FLP (Food, Land, People)
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We need your help to continue these important programs!

The Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District / SC Project WET hosted coordinators from all over the country for the 2016 Annual Project WET USA Coordinators Conference. These educators came to Greenville from as far away as Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, and even Canada! By all accounts, the Project WET USA Coordinators had a great time connecting, sharing knowledge, and inspiring each other. The crew also experienced a Rainfall Simulator demonstration shared by the South Carolina DNR. Everyone learned about soil health, stormwater, and erosion as they watched a variety of situations that can happen during rainfall on various ground surfaces.

Project WET Coordinators celebrated the vibrant mill history of Greenville with a silk painting activity led by local artist Jaidra Durant at Sip Rooftop.
Caught in the Act! - Around the District

From the District Conservationist/NRCS

High Tunnels for Farming

Do you market your veggies at local farmers markets or grow on a large scale? Would you like to extend your growing season but concerned about early or late frosts?

From small scale to large acre farms, a high tunnel or hoop house may be for you. High tunnels extend the growing season in spring and fall, and improve soil health and plant quality. High tunnels can also improve air quality and reduce energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce.

They are at least 6 feet tall and the sides and ends roll up to allow air flow. Crops are grown in the soil profile.

NRCS Cost Share Funding for Farmers

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offers cost share funding to install high tunnels through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). To participate in EQIP, an applicant must be an individual, entity, or joint farm operation that meets EQIP eligibility criteria.

If you are interested in a high tunnel or other practices to improve the natural resources on your property, please contact us to get started.

Applicants may call the Greenville NRCS office at 864-467-2755 for more information.

visit us at www.GreenvilleSoilandWater.com
GCSWCD Receives Major Grants

NACD Urban Agriculture Grant

The National Association of Conservation Districts, in partnership with USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service, has awarded a $50,000 Urban Agriculture Grant to the Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District. The grant will partially fund the Legacy City Farm project, an urban demonstration farm which will showcase the latest conservation techniques in urban agriculture. The farm will serve as an example of best management practices to residents, community gardens, and the local small farm community. NACD granted a total of $2 million to GCSWCD and 41 other districts across 25 states.

“I’d like to congratulate these conservation districts on their outstanding leadership and continued commitment to improving and protecting our natural resources on urban landscapes,” NACD President Lee McDaniel said. “NACD is exceedingly proud of these districts’ work to strengthen agriculture conservation efforts in communities that are typically underserved, and in many cases, considered food deserts.”

In a county with diminishing surrounding farmland, urban gardening has become increasingly necessary, and a model farm showing sound practices is much needed. Teaching farm manager Jason Schmidt, GCSWCD and Legacy Charter School, along with collaborators Campbell Young Leaders, Chartwells, and Greater Greenville Sanitation, expect the farm to grow fresh produce that will feed Legacy students. Additional produce will be offered to the local community as it becomes available. Greenville has a long history of urban gardening with a strong network of community gardens.

Legacy Charter Schools is located in a USDA Economic Research Service recognized food desert. Many residents have young children who do not have access to affordable fruits and vegetables on a regular basis. In attempts to counteract this, the farm will provide not only produce to the surrounding neighborhood, but also education opportunities to local residents and small farmers about new conservation farming techniques that will allow residents to begin to garden and grow their own produce. Along with its collaborators, Legacy Charter School will utilize sustainable practices to educate the school, the neighboring community, and community gardens about soil and water conservation while providing the local community as well as the school with a supply of fresh produce and agricultural products.

The Legacy City Farm aims to become a model production farm in order to explore and highlight technical aspects of urban agriculture that can be done by everyone.

GCSWCD receives $14,000 Grant to fund Project WET Teacher Workshops

GCSWCD Education Staff serve as State Coordinators for Project WET (Water Education for Teachers). As State Coordinators, the District is partnering with Duke Energy to provide no cost workshops to 250 teachers in the Duke Energy service area.

This grant will allow educators to attend these workshops and receive related materials in 2017.

The goal of the Project WET program is to facilitate and promote the awareness, appreciation, knowledge, and stewardship of water resources through the development and dissemination of classroom ready teaching aids and the establishment of state and internationally sponsored Project WET programs.

The Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide 2.0 is the key to Project WET’s water education. The Guide is designed for formal and non-formal educators of K-12 students and it can only be obtained by attending a workshop.

Legacy City Farm

Article by Shelby Cohen, GCSWCD Education Outreach Assistant

Greetings Greenville! I’m the new Conservation Education Assistant. I’m incredibly happy to have joined the team and to have a position where I’m able to help educate the community and protect Greenville’s natural resources. I have my MA in Global Sustainability from the University of South Florida and have spent the past four years living in Asia and Europe where I taught English, carried out research on sustainable transportation, and worked on an organic farm. I’m excited to bring my experiences to Greenville and continue learning alongside my brilliant colleagues.

One of the projects I’ll be working on is Greenville’s first farm-to-cafeteria journey - Legacy City Farm! This project combines everything I love - sustainable agriculture, education, and conservation. Students from Legacy Charter School will grow their own produce that will then be served in the school’s cafeteria. Not only will Legacy City Farm teach students invaluable life skills, but it will also join the urban farm movement that’s sweeping the nation and helping communities connect the dots in their local food system.

As school farms become more prominent, studies have shown they’re helping to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, academic achievement, and an overall willingness to try new and healthy food. Likewise, they’ve helped improve cafeteria operations, such as implementing new waste management policies and shifting towards local sourcing. We’re especially excited to use the farm as a tool to teach students about the importance of sustainable agriculture, and soil and water health.

Popular student responses when asked which fruits and veggies they most want to grow.

This project is more than just veggies – it’s an opportunity for students to realize their neighborhood’s potential as a local economy that supports environmental stewardship, a flowering of community interaction, and a revolution of health and nutrition. I’m happy to be a part of this mission and hope projects like Legacy City Farm will become the norm across Greenville County!
Staff Directory

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www.greenvillesoilandwater.com
Upcoming Events

Save the date for these District events that will be happening over the next several months! Stay tuned for more information!

73rd Annual Essay Contest
Entries Due March 17
March 3-5

Spring Southern Home and Garden Show
April 1

iMAGINE Upstate
April 15

Party for the Planet
May 6

Duck Derby
May 18

GCSWCD Jungle Safari Gala
Summer 2017

Wet & Wild Water Camp
August 6-9

SENACD Annual Conference
September 20-22

SCCDEA Annual Conference