

Conservation Digest



GREENVILLE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
FALL 2009

Cleveland Park Demonstration Rain Garden Completed



In July 2009, Clemson Extension's Greenville Office coordinated an effort to design and install a demonstration rain garden in Greenville's Cleveland Park. This garden is now open to the public! It will be used by Clemson Extension, the Greater Greenville Master Gardener Association and others to teach local residents how to use rain gardens in their own landscapes to reduce problems associated with storm water runoff. Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District staff developed educational signs to accompany the new garden.

To view installation photos, obtain additional information and download Clemson Extension's Rain Garden Manual, please visit <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/county/greenville/programs/horticulture/raingarden.html>

Thank you to all Rain Garden contributors and sponsors:

City of Greenville Parks and Recreation
The Greater Greenville Master Gardener Association
Stalite PermaTill
Greenville County Land Development Division
Lichtenfelt Nurseries
Renee Byrd, Clemson University Department of Horticulture



Commissioner Danny Howard assists volunteers installing the Cleveland Park Demonstration Rain Garden.



Liatris blooming in the Rain Garden.

Watershed Dams Repaired

By Kirsten Robertson, Conservation District Manager

One of the Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District's main duties is to maintain nine dams that were built in the county over a period of two decades from 1961 to 1981. These dams were built with federal money under Public Law 566 in order to control flooding; thereby protecting lives and property.

The dams are built on private property and landowners signed easements allowing the District to operate and maintain the dams. The landowner enjoys use of the lakes for fishing, wildlife habitat, boating and aesthetic purposes.

Because some of these dams are close to 50 years old, the design life of the dam, refurbishing of some of the structures was deemed necessary to keep them in working order.

Last year, the District hired a company to dive the lakes and make a report on outlet structure conditions. From this report, a plan of work was created. The contract to cycle the gates and/or replace the deteriorated hardware was awarded to McCall Brothers. McCall Brothers is currently more than halfway finished with the work and the District is pleased to be able to assure the integrity of the gates and structures for years to come.



Watershed Lakes
Greenville County, SC



McCall Brothers replacing rusted trash racks
with newly fabricated ones.



Web Soil Survey: The One-Stop Soils Shop

**Contributed by Emory Holsonback,
NRCS Resource Soil Scientist**

If you need the most up-to-date soils information available, the Web Soil Survey (WSS) is for you. It provides agricultural producers, land-use planners, real estate agents and others electronic access to relevant soil data and soil interpretations needed to make land-use and management decisions.

WSS provides soil data produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey, which is a joint effort of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other federal agencies, state agencies, and local participants. It is operated by NRCS and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. NRCS has soil maps and data available online for all of South Carolina's counties as well as 95% of the nation's counties. The site is updated and maintained online as the single authoritative source of soil survey information.

With WSS, soils information can be accessed for your particular geographic area of interest. Once that area has been selected, a soils map can be produced. WSS also allows users to generate thematic maps of soil interpretations and chemical or physical properties. For example, suppose you have a piece of property and want to build a house with a septic system, you can produce maps and reports in WSS showing the soils on the property which are best suited for these uses.

There are more than 100 soil interpretation ratings and more than 40 soil property ratings available. If you want soils information, Web Soil Survey has got it. To get it, go to <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>. Best of all....it's FREE!!

Build-a-Rain Barrel Workshop



Participants in GCSWCD's first Build-a-Rain Barrel workshop were provided with supplies and technical assistance to build their own rain barrel.



Kirsten Robertson, District Manager, and JC Ward, Education Program Manager, prepare rain barrels



Kirsten gives expert advice to a participant



Assembly required flexibility!



Even the youngest participated in assembling the 9 rain barrels

Rain Barrels Can Help Homeowners



A rain barrel collects and stores rainwater from your roof that would otherwise be lost to runoff and diverted to storm drains and streams. A rain barrel is relatively simple and inexpensive to construct and can sit conveniently under any residential gutter and down spout.

Lawn and garden watering make up nearly 40% of total household water use during the summer. Using a rain barrel to collect and store water will save most homeowners about 1,300 gallons of water per year. Only 1/4 inch of rainfall runoff from the average roof will completely fill the typical barrel. Saving water not only helps protect the environment, it saves you money and energy!

Diverting water from your downspout into rain barrels helps homeowners by:

- ◆ Reducing the volume of water flowing to the water treatment facility
- ◆ Lowering urban runoff
- ◆ Backing up sources of water during times of drought or between rain showers
- ◆ Helping to keep our creeks and beaches clean
- ◆ Naturally softening water (great for delicate houseplants, auto cleaning and window washing)
- ◆ Saving money by lowering water bills
- ◆ Reducing the need for additional tax dollars for sewer expansion
- ◆ Helping maintain a healthy biotic community in the soil
- ◆ Teaching neighbors and other residents about water conservation

Complete instructions and pictures for building a rain barrel can be found at http://www.clemson.edu/public/carolinaclear/consortiums/pickens_home/downloads/rainbarrel_manual.pdf

Ready-made rain barrels can be purchased from a number of companies, including hardware stores and garden supply stores.

Upstate Teachers Train for Environmental Education

This summer, teachers and school administrators from across the Upstate joined the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District for training in “Project WET” and “Action for a Cleaner Tomorrow”. Both nationally-recognized programs contain important natural resource conservation messages. Participants engaged in hands-on activities for kindergarten through eighth grade students. Each teacher also earned in-service points from the School District for teacher certification and took home valuable, interpretation-based lesson plans. From water quality testing on the Reedy River in Falls Park to habitat relay races, this year’s participants displayed an amazing zest for learning while picking up pointers on curriculum guides.

While most of the week was spent in a classroom, the teachers took a field trip of their own at the end of our one-week training. Our group visited locations in Greenville County available for student field trips during the school year. This summer, we toured Renewable Water Resources’ (ReWa) treatment plant, hiked Lake Conestee’s nature trail, and explored May-lan Tree Farm’s grounds and petting farm. Each stop on our “field trip” included a knowledgeable guide to interpret the surroundings. May-lan Tree Farm also extended their hospitality to the teachers by awarding door prizes.

GCSWCD appreciates the participation of ReWa, Conestee Foundation, May-lan Tree Farm, and all of the fantastic teachers who made this year’s summer teacher training successful!



ReWa Water Treatment Plant



Lake Conestee Nature Park



Teachers, GCSWCD Commissioners & Staff on a field trip tour of the County

Worm Bin Adoption

This September, the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District office was home to tens of thousands of worms! The District received an unusual offer: a donation of 22 worm bins. Viviane Culbertson raised the worms for fishing bait and lovingly tended them with a special mix of soil, food and moisture control. Ms. Culbertson donated a total of 22 bins, including the healthy, happy worms. The Conservation District advertised the free worm bins to educational outlets and local gardeners and 'sold out' within 48 hours. These worms will serve as an environmentally-friendly source of fertilizer, feeding on kitchen waste and newspaper to produce quality compost. The District thanks Viviane Culbertson for her generosity and the adoptive worm parents for their participation in our first Worm Bin Adoption!



The District also maintains a worm bin for office staff use and education. Our resident worms visit classrooms throughout the County as ambassadors for vermi-composting (worm bin composting), helping students understand the importance of worms and decomposers in the soil food web.

District Staff & Partners

Linda Creel, GCSWCD Administrative Assistant
Gene Dobbins, GCSWCD District Engineer
Kirsten Robertson, GCSWCD District Manager
JC Ward, GCSWCD Education Program Manager

Hollis Berry, NRCS Soil Technician
Collin Buckner, NRCS Soil Conservationist
Lynne Newton, NRCS District Conservationist

Ken Forrester, SC DNR Program Coordinator

**GREENVILLE COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**
301 University Ridge, Suite 4800
Greenville, SC 29601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District
301 University Ridge, Suite 4800, Greenville, SC 29601 864-467-2755

Commissioners

Dr. Robert Hanley, Chairman • Claire Bradbery, Vice-Chairman • Danny Howard, Secretary-Treasurer • Darrell Harrison • David Gibble • Ben H. Dillard, Commissioner Emeritus

Commissioners meet on the second Tuesday of every month at 9:30 AM at County Square in a meeting that is open to the public. Call 864-467-2755 for details on location of the conference room.

Commissioners are unpaid volunteers, three elected in the general election for a four year term and two are appointed.

Affiliate Member Donations Underwrite the Conservation Education Effort for the District

Benefactor – \$1,000

Renewable Water Resources

Friend – \$500

*Darrell & Georgia Harrison
Strange Brothers Grading Co., Inc.*

Sustaining – \$150

*Ashmore Brothers, Inc.
Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative
Caliber Engineering Consultants, LLC
Farm Bureau of Greenville
McCall Environmental
Roper Mountain Science Center*

Associate – \$100

*Mr. & Mrs. Richard G. Christopher, III
Dobbins Engineering, Inc.
Mrs. Vance Drawdy
Mr. & Mrs. William H. Earle
Dr. William Gressette
John & Carol Hopkins
Laurens Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Rogers, J.L. & Calcott Engineers, Inc.*

Site Design, Inc.

Charles & Martha Wright

Contributing - \$50

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Howard Farms
Grady & Mary Rose Jones
Pecan Dale Farmstead
Paul Wickensimer
J. Randall & Pat Wynn*

Regular – \$35

*Bob Jones University
Danny Howard
Lynne Newton
North Greenville University
Melvin Pace, Pace Building Co.
Ralph Sizemore
SynTerra Corp.*

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