



Annual Report 2009

Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District



Mission

Our mission is to protect natural resources through education, programs, and cooperative efforts with partner organizations to achieve common goals for the benefit of all citizens of Greenville County by promoting and enhancing prudent soil and water conservation practices.

Objectives

- Urban & Land Use Planning
- Conservation Awareness
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Water Quality and Quantity
- Customer Service

Commissioners



*Dr. Robert Hanley, Chairman
Marine biologist and President of
Friends of the Reedy River*



*Claire Bradbery, Vice-Chairman
Cattle farmer*



*Danny Howard, Secretary-Treasurer
Clemson Extension Office
Lead County Agent*



*Darrell Harrison, Commissioner
Earth Team volunteer with NRCS*



*David Gibble, Commissioner
Business owner and Farmer*

Affiliate Member Donations Underwrite the Conservation Education Effort of the District

Businesses and individuals across the Upstate supporting the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District's educational program with financial donations during 2008-2009:

2008-2009 Affiliate Members

Regular - \$35

Bob Jones University
Lynne Newton
Melvin Pace, Pace Building Co.
SynTerra Corp.

Danny Howard
North Greenville University
Ralph Sizemore

Contributing - \$50

Bob & Claire Bradbery
Dennis & Judy DeFrancesco
Jim & Beverly Fogle
Howard Farms
Pecan Dale Farmstead
J. Randall & Pat Wynn

John & Teresia Case
Mr. & Mrs. John K. Earle
Hayes Food Products, Inc.
Grady & Mary Rose Jones
Paul Wickensimer

Associate - \$100

Mr. & Mrs. Richard G. Christopher, III
Mrs. Vance Drawdy
Dr. William N. Gressette
Laurens Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Site Design, Inc.

Dobbins Engineering, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. William H. Earle
John & Carol Hopkins
Rogers & Callcott Engineers, Inc.
Charles & Martha Wright

Sustaining - \$150

Ashmore Bros., Inc.
Caliber Engineering Consultants, LLC
McCall Environmental

Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative
Farm Bureau of Greenville
Roper Mountain Science Center

Friend- \$500

Darrell & Georgia Harrison
Strange Bros. Grading Co., Inc.

Benefactor- \$1,000

Renewable Water Resources

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Conservation District prohibit discrimination in their programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA office of Communications at (202) 720-5881 (voice) or (202) 720-7808 (TDD). To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, or call (202) 720-7327 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). The USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

Soil & Water Conservation District Staff



Pictured from left: Kirsten Robertson, District Manager; Gene Dobbins, District Engineer; JC Ward, Education Program Manager. Not pictured: Linda Creel, Administrative Support

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff



Pictured from left: Collin Buckner, Soil Conservationist; Hollis Berry, Soil Conservation Technician; Lynne Newton, District Conservationist

A Message from the Chairman

The dog days of summer have arrived. Even though the State Climatologist says that the drought has ended, you couldn't prove it by looking at water levels in many Upstate streams, or by depth to water in many local groundwater wells. A hot and dry July has once again parched many fields and leaves are wilting on many trees and shrubs. Even though Greenville County is at 99% of our average rainfall so far in 2009, this is no time to put water conservation on the back burner. We at the Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District continue to promote programs that preserve two of our most precious natural resources, soil and water. This annual report highlights some of our success stories. The Conservation District Commissioners and staff trust that you find the report informative and useful.

The past year has seen considerable changes in the District Commission. Past Chairman Bill Earle vacated his office, and David Gible was elected to fill his seat. David and his wife April manage a small farm in northern Greenville County, on which they sustainably raise blueberries.

This past year has also seen several long-time staff members depart and the arrival of some new faces. We hired Kirsten Robertson as the District's Manager. Kirsten, who raises goats in her "spare" time, has an engineering background. Kirsten is a quick study with respect to the District's programs, and is taking steps to increase the District's effectiveness and reach. Becky Wooten, who served as the District's Education Coordinator for 20 years, retired from Greenville County. Becky's husband Jim accepted a position in Beaufort and in spite of our efforts to encourage Becky to stay in Greenville, she decided to move to Beaufort too. Luckily, J.C. Ward, a young and energetic natural resources educator, decided to accept our offer. JC is continuing many of the programs initiated by Becky, but has also forged ahead with new educational programs.

Sadly, Ben Dillard passed away this year. Ben served as a District Commissioner for over two decades. The District plans to plant a tree in Ben's name to recognize his years of service and dedication to conservation.

Accomplishments during the past year include several emergency watershed protection projects, undertaking maintenance and repairs to several of the watershed lakes that the District manages, conducting teacher workshops, improving trout habitat in northern Greenville County, and, of course, recognizing students in our annual essay contest. We also recognized several conservation champions at our annual banquet. During the legislative session, each Commissioner contacted legislators to impress on them the importance of continued Conservation District funding.

In closing, the Commissioners wish to acknowledge and thank those whose financial support allows us to implement our various programs. Greenville County Council and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources provide much of our discretionary funding. The United States Natural Resources Conservation Service makes available federal dollars for several conservation programs and watershed protection. Our education programs couldn't reach as many without the generous support from individuals and businesses.

Feel free to drop by when you are near County Square and meet the staff or attend a monthly meeting (usually on the second Tuesday of each month).

Sincerely yours,
Rob Hanley, Chair

Outstanding Cooperator of the Year Recognized for Conservation on the Land



Tim Ayers of Ayers Farm accepts the Cooperator of the Year 2009 Award from Commission Chairman, Dr. Robert Hanley

Tim Ayers of Ayers Farm was recognized as the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District's Outstanding Cooperator of the Year.

Mr. Ayers utilized the EQIP cost share program through the Natural Resources Conservation Service to make significant improvements to his land.

These improvements not only benefit Ayers Farm, but because of their positive impact on the environment, also benefit future generations.

Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District could not perform such meaningful work without the cooperation of committed land owners, like Tim Ayers.



Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Awarded

Gay Irwin of Riverside Middle School was granted the Conservation Education Teacher of the Year 2009 award by the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District.

Ms. Irwin is an 8th grade science teacher and Team Leader at Riverside Middle School in Greer. She not only educates within her classroom, but also provides enriching educational experiences in a classroom without walls.

In an effort to connect her science students with the natural world around them, Ms. Irwin spearheaded an effort to establish an Outdoor Learning Center at Riverside Middle School. With the help of the Conservation District, Ms. Irwin planned a rain garden, rain barrel construction, and nature trail for conservation education. Gay Irwin has personally invested herself in conservation for future generations.



Gay Irwin of Riverside Middle School accepts the Conservation Teacher of the Year 2009 Award from Commission Chairman, Dr. Robert Hanley



Rain barrels were installed by the District and NRCS at Riverside Middle School as part of Ms. Irwin's project.



Overhead view of Riverside Middle School outlining available space for proposed Outdoor Learning Center and Nature Trail.

2009 Essay Contest Winners



Fifth Grade Essay Contest Winners

(Pictured Left to Right with Dr. Robert Hanley, GCSWCD Commission Chairman)

Helen Loaiza, *Berea Elementary*
Travis Heath, *Robert E. Cashion Elementary*
Anna Grace Marrett, *Robert E. Cashion Elementary*
Mallory Pierce, *Robert E. Cashion Elementary*
Hannah Moon, *Robert E. Cashion Elementary*

"We all must play a part by changing our lifestyles whenever we can to conserve water. Simple things like changing a leaky faucet or not running water while brushing your teeth are little things that can really add up if everyone were to do it." - Anna Grace Marrett, 5th grade

Sixth Grade Essay Contest Winners

(Pictured Left to Right with Dr. Robert Hanley, GCSWCD Commission Chairman)

Patrick McLearn, *St. Joseph's Catholic School*
Andrew Schatteman, *St. Joseph's Catholic School*
Sam Newcomer, *Northwest Middle School*
Danielle Grosse, *St. Joseph's Catholic School*
Not Pictured:
Marcelo Roballo, *Northwest Middle School*



"It is through community education that people begin to understand the importance of water conservation. Conservation begins with each individual." - Andrew Schatteman, 6th grade

"Water for a Thirsty Planet"

Seventh Grade Essay Contest Winners

*(Pictured Left to Right with Dr. Robert Hanley,
GCSWCD Commission Chairman)*

Lauren Fox, *Riverside Middle School*
Adeline King, *Hillcrest Middle School*
Alec Biscopink, *St. Joseph's Catholic School*
Chandler Reid, *Hillcrest Middle School*
Lewis Harvey, *Hillcrest Middle School*



"Blue Gold: water is the oil of the 21st century. This Blue Gold is not merely a luxury or convenience, but essential for human life." - Alec Biscopink, 7th grade



Eighth Grade Essay Contest Winners

*(Pictured Left to Right with Dr. Robert Hanley,
GCSWCD Commission Chairman)*

Audrey Dannar, *Sterling School*
Daniel Harvey, *Sterling School*

"You reach for the sink, readily anticipating the full-force flow of ice cold water. You push your cup under the faucet, and—nothing." - Audrey Dannar, 8th grade

Long Branch Project:

From Crack Houses to Community Park

By Lynne Newton, NRCS District Conservationist



Undermined bank stabilization at Long Branch Baptist Church



Project plans include a native rock seating area near walking trails

What was once a drug-infested city block of crack houses in downtown Greenville is being transformed into a beautiful park for children and adults to enjoy. Through a partnership among Long Branch church, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), and Foothills Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC & D), a community is benefiting from urban conservation.

Long Branch Baptist Church is an inner city church founded in 1928 that presently serves a community that is experiencing urban renewal and growing community pride. Under the leadership of Pastor Sean Dogan, the church purchased lots adjacent to their property and demolished 18 abandoned houses, which were home to a host of criminal activities. Where these houses once stood were now bare, empty lots.

Pastor Dogan contacted Lynne Newton, NRCS District Conservationist, in February 2008 for assistance in stabilizing a tributary through his congregation's property. As Ms. Newton provided options to the pastor for the creek, the project grew from stream restoration to city block beautification. With the help of Dave Demarest, NRCS Coordinator for the Foothills RC&D, the church received funding through the RC&D Council and the South Carolina Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program to host a tree planting workshop and plant curb trees around the property. On January 22, 2009, 38 church and community members came together for the workshop and tree planting. Within two hours, 40 trees were planted, including Bald Cypress, Over Cup Oak, Kousa Dogwood, and Nutall Oak. These species were selected by urban foresters based on site factors such as soil, moisture, light, space, temperature hardiness zone, aesthetics and urban wildlife benefits.

The next phase of the project will be stream bank restoration. Gene Dobbins, Greenville SWCD Engineer and retired NRCS Engineer, designed the project. Once permits are received, construction will begin. The project involves restoring 170 feet of stream, planting a 100-foot riparian buffer on each side of the creek with hardwoods and grasses, and creating a native rock seating area.

The Soil & Water Conservation District will host monthly afterschool workshops for neighborhood children, so they can learn about water quality, soils, forestry and wildlife. An alternative school is nearby and the church hosts the Senior Action Program. Children, seniors, and the community as a whole will benefit from the Long Branch Baptist Church project and the partnerships that made it possible.

Education Programs reach all ages



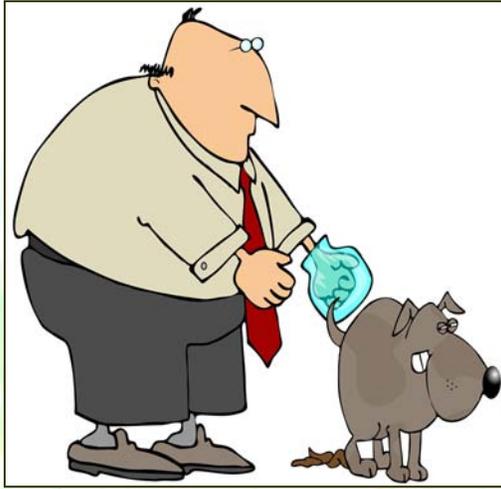
Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District's educational programs convey messages of natural resource conservation to a wide, multi-generational audience. Education Programs are made possible through the generosity of Affiliate Member donations.

2008-2009 Education Activity Report

- ◆ 18 County teachers attended GCSWCD's Summer Workshop in August 2008
- ◆ The Conservation District sent 12 students to Carolina Coastal Adventure
- ◆ 320 County teachers participated in environmentally-themed monthly seminars through the SWCD and NRCS
- ◆ Multiple Arbor Day celebrations in area schools were sponsored by the Conservation District
- ◆ A Master Gardener presentation for WaterSmart Education Program was hosted by the District
- ◆ 7 schools received Enviro-scape presentations
- ◆ Over 200 people were reached through Enviro-scape presentations at the Greenville Zoo's Conservation Day
- ◆ 100 members of the public stopped by the SWCD's display at Earth Fest on the Greenville Tech campus
- ◆ Educational outreach was also presented at the South Greenville Fair in Simpsonville and at the Aunt Het Festival in Fountain Inn
- ◆ Water quality and storm water brochures were translated into Spanish
- ◆ More than 100 oil recycling pans were distributed at area auto parts stores
- ◆ Education staff was trained in Action for a Cleaner Tomorrow
- ◆ The District partnered with local conservation groups and municipalities to create a demonstration Rain Garden in Cleveland Park
- ◆ 40 Biodegradable plastic water bottles were distributed as promotional and educational items
- ◆ Pet waste bag dispensers containing biodegradable bags were awarded at the Mauldin Library's Dog Days of Summer
- ◆ 6 new 'Scoop the Poop' stations were installed in parks throughout the County

Scoop the Poop: It's no joke

Is it really a problem?



Animal waste is a seemingly small source of pollution that can add up to a big problem for water quality and human health, particularly in public parks and recreation areas.

Both fresh and decomposing pet wastes contain two main types of pollutants: nutrients and pathogens. When rains wash over the soil on a path to the stream, lake, or river, they pick up pet waste. This waste ends up in water bodies, decomposes, and releases nutrients and bacteria into the water. This causes excessive growth of algae and weeds and can lead to severe illness in humans. Such pollution makes water useless for recreation, swimming, boating, or fishing and can be harmful to us.

Water pollution can be caused by animal waste decomposition. To avoid water quality problems caused by pet waste, clean up after pets every time and dispose of the waste properly.

Greenville County is a part of the solution!

Under the federal Clean Water Act, DHEC and Greenville County implement pollution prevention plans and perform public outreach and education.

Greenville County's Soil & Water Conservation District and Land Development Division:

- ◆ Make local water safer by decreasing fecal coliform bacteria pollution.
- ◆ Provide reduced-cost 'Scoop the Poop' stations, which include a bag dispenser, starter pack of pet waste disposal bags, and educational sign to the public.
- ◆ Provide reduced-cost, outdoor educational signage for private businesses.
- ◆ Distribute biodegradable, pet waste bags in keychain-sized dispensers.
- ◆ Perform education at dog-friendly events throughout the County.
- ◆ Install free pet waste stations in parks throughout the County.
- ◆ Issue public service announcements and press releases for 'Scoop the Poop' campaign.



To request reduced-cost 'Scoop the Poop' stations and educational signs or free pet waste bag keychain dispensers, please contact Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District at 864-467-2755.

A Message from the District Manager

Dear Friends,

Wow! This has been an exciting year for the District! We've had major staffing changes with the addition of a new District Manager and a new Education Program Director. All clicked along smoothly, even with the gaps in staff for part of the year. I extend many thanks to the steadfast Commissioners, our Affiliate Members, the County of Greenville, and the faithful staff members who kept the office and programs running smoothly throughout the transition.

An amazing amount was accomplished this year. The Education summary on page 11 highlights some of our education activities. By partnering with NRCS, the Conservation District was able to:

- respond to approximately 1000 requests for information and technical advice,
- apply conservation practices on 547 acres of pastureland using Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost share money to improve water quality and protect the soil, and
- protect 25 sites through Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) funding.

Some of our construction projects included:

Dam repair and maintenance

- stabilizing the plunge pool downstream of the South Tyger #2 dam
- contracting our yearly maintenance mowing on the District's nine dams
- clearing of the auxiliary spillways and minor dam repairs on three dams
- responding to the results of the underwater inspections last year. The District designed and contracted a project to implement repairs to the primary spillway structures of all nine dams.

Work with Foothills Resource, Conservation and Development Council

- securing funding for 4795 feet of trout habitat improvement on the South Saluda River
- stabilizing stream banks
- improving trout habitat on 1500 feet of the Middle Saluda River
- planting 40 trees at Long Branch Baptist Church (see page 10)

Other Erosion Control Projects

- repairing a highly eroded area on Silver View Lane.

We are excited about our work and look forward to a great year ahead. Thank you for your continuing support.

Sincerely,
Kirsten Robertson
District Manager

Fiscal Summary of Benefits to Greenville County Citizens

Construction	\$140,821.40
Education	\$18,766.18
Money disbursed through NRCS's EQIP program	\$39,752.00
Money disbursed through NRCS's EWP program	\$490,437.95
Money disbursed through NRCS's WHIP program	\$100,000.00
Total	\$789,777.53