

Annual Report 2010

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*



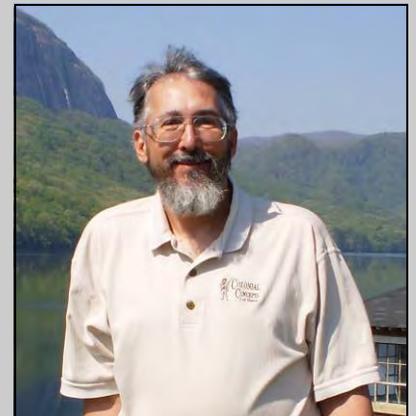
*Claire Bradbery, Vice-Chairman
Cattle farmer*



*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 2009-2010:

2009-2010 Affiliate Members

Regular - \$35

Bob Jones University
Danny Howard
Melvin Pace, *Pace Building Co.*

Cely Construction
North Greenville University

Contributing - \$50

Bob & Claire Bradbery
Dennis & Judy DeFrancesco
Fant, Reichert & Fogleman, Inc.
Furman University
Hayes Food Products, Inc.
Grady & Mary Rose Jones
Paul Wickensimer

John & Teresia Case
Mr. & Mrs. John K. Earle
Jim & Beverly Fogle
Green Lake Properties
Howard Farms
Lynne Newton
J. Randall & Pat Wynn

Associate - \$100

Dobbins Engineering, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. William H. Earle
Dr. & Mrs. Rob Hanley
Fred & Kay Payne
Rogers & Callcott Engineers, Inc.

Mrs. Vance Drawdy
Dr. William N. Gressette
Butch & Diane Kirven
Pecan Dale Farmstead
Charles & Martha Wright

Sustaining - \$150

AgSouth Farm Credit
Caliber Engineering Consultants, LLC
McCall Environmental
Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative
Farm Bureau of Greenville

Friend- \$500

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

Benefactor- \$1,000

Renewable Water Resources

In-kind Donors

Crow Dog Native Ferns
Eliza & Rayna Holcombe
Trees Greenville

Dr. John Hains
South Carolina Native Plant Society

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A Message from the Chairman

Fellow Conservationists:

This year, the Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District continued its tradition of service to Greenville County's citizens. For me, the highlight of this year was the completion and dedication of the urban conservation project at Long Branch Baptist Church. Through the efforts of a partnership among Long Branch Baptist Church, Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District, Trees Greenville, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Foothills Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC & D); what was once a ditch has been transformed into an urban oasis. I urge you to stop by Long Branch Baptist Church and see what can be accomplished through the hard work of a dedicated team.

Partnering with other organizations also afforded the District opportunities to conserve natural resources. Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the District and NRCS assisted a number of landowners with projects that conserve our precious water and soil. NRCS and Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District installed watering devices and assisted livestock owners with keeping animals out of streams. Through our partnership with Foothills RC & D, the District assisted in several trout habitat improvement projects in the upper Saluda River basin. These projects stabilized eroding banks and fostered the creation and protection of trout habitat.

Through our partnership with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, we sent a team of high school students to the statewide Envirothon competition, where they placed fourth overall. We also sent students to the S.C. Institute for Natural Resource Conservation at Lander University, where some Greenville County representatives won scholarships. The District sponsored the largest delegation to the Carolina Coastal Adventure in Berkeley County. We hope these opportunities will spark an interest in conservation for the students, their parents and high school teachers.

The District has completed a substantial maintenance project on the watershed lake dams over which the District has authority. This maintenance included repairing many of the gate valve assemblies that control water levels in these watershed lakes. Built about fifty years ago, some mechanical components are now nearing the end of their design lives. The dams' continued functioning is a testament to the efforts of the District and of the landowners around the lakes to implement sound soil conservation practices.

District funding and effective partnerships allow our staff to serve Greenville County's residents in many different ways. The Commission extends its gratitude to the partner agencies that support us financially and technically. We also thank our affiliate members, whose support allows us to develop and continue our education programs.

As always, feel free to drop by our offices in County Square to meet the staff or attend a Commission meeting on the second Tuesday of each month.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Hanley
Chairman



This year, the District performed major maintenance on the working parts of all nine District-managed watershed dams. The gates, trash racks and actuators of the dams were all repaired or replaced to ensure proper functioning. All rusted steel was replaced with stainless steel. This is the first time in 40-50 years this work has been needed, which is a testament to the quality of the original construction by NRCS.

The District played an integral part in rehabilitating a stream, planting new trees and constructing an outdoor education area in an urban conservation project at Long Branch Baptist Church. Pictured (from left to right) are Dave Demarest of Foothills Resource Conservation and Development, Pastor Sean Dogan of Long Branch Baptist Church, and Lynne Newton of the Natural Resource Conservation Service seated in the newly installed outdoor education area.



District Commissioners voted to fund an irrigation check program in conjunction with two neighboring districts, NRCS and three water districts. The voluntary program evaluates the effectiveness of residential irrigation systems. It includes an evaluation of the grasses used, the root depth, the soil type, the watering times, irrigation system malfunctions and overall efficiency of the system. Following an onsite audit, landowners are given advice from the program staff. When implemented, conservation practices suggested by the staff save the landowner money and help conserve water.

The District designed three bottom-water release siphons this year. These siphons pull cool water from the bottom of the lake to feed downstream waterways. By cooling the water downstream, bottom-water release siphons create and protect habitat for native fish, which cannot thrive in warmer waters. One siphon was installed at Lake Wattacoo in the Ashmore Heritage Preserve. Lake Wattacoo nurtures rare species of flora and fauna and the District is pleased to have enhanced the habitat for some of these species.



In December, the District partnered with NRCS and SCDHEC to host a day-long workshop for lake and pond owners. Topics included dam inspections, regulations, pond health and liability issues. Feedback from the 100 participants was overwhelmingly positive. We are pleased that we have helped to make lake ownership more safe and enjoyable for people across the state.

2009-2010 Education Program Report



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.

- ◆ 24 County teachers attended GCSWCD's Summer Workshop in August 2009
- ◆ The Conservation District sent 7 students to Carolina Coastal Adventure
- ◆ 57 County teachers participated in environmentally-themed monthly seminars through the SWCD
- ◆ 52 school presentations, reaching 1,300 students, were delivered by Education staff
- ◆ 100 members of the public stopped by the SWCD's composting and soil display at the Children's Museum Earth Day celebration
- ◆ 50 oil recycling pans were distributed at Furman University's Hispanic Day
- ◆ Educational signs on water pollution from pet waste were posted at 10 area pet stores
- ◆ 940 pet waste bag dispensers were given to dog owners at Paws for a Cause, Riverfest and Greenville County Humane Society
- ◆ 10 new 'Scoop the Poop' stations were installed in parks throughout the County
- ◆ Spanish-language brochures on landscaping for cleaner water were distributed to lawn care professionals
- ◆ Public Service Announcements on water quality were broadcast on two local radio stations
- ◆ The District and partner organizations installed Outdoor Learning Centers at Grove Elementary and Berea Elementary, reaching 657 students
- ◆ Grove Elementary's Outdoor Learning Center was certified as a Schoolyard Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation
- ◆ Greenville County's Envirothon team placed 4th in the SC state competition and was coached by District Manager, Kirsten Robertson
- ◆ District Education Program Manager, JC Ward, served as a 'Green Steps' school mentor for two wildlife habitat restoration projects
- ◆ Greenville County trained 14 Conservation District employees from the Upstate on the Leopold Education Project
- ◆ 7 newsletter articles on water conservation were distributed to Homeowners' Associations
- ◆ 25 new storm drain markers were installed by volunteers

NRCS Celebrates 75 Years of Conservation

This year, the United States Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) celebrates 75 years of “helping people help the land”. On April 27, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Soil Conservation Act creating the first Soil Conservation Service, now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service under the United States Department of Agriculture. NRCS was formed to assist farmers in reducing soil erosion through farm demonstrations.



NRCS Soil Scientist teaches a Boy Scout troop about the properties of soil. Undated, Charleston, SC



Dedication of the Farm Plan under the First Soil Conservation District Plan in the U.S. 1938, Spartanburg, SC

NRCS staff continues to work with many local farmers and landowners throughout Greenville County to decrease soil erosion, improve water quality and restore wildlife habitat. NRCS provides technical as well as cost share assistance. This past year, Greenville County citizens received \$114,715 in cost share funds through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program to assist farmers in the installation of watering tanks, heavy use areas, fencing, water bars,

pasture and critical area planting. Through the Conservation Stewardship Program, 1,049 acres of timberland and cropland were enrolled. NRCS also provided technical assistance to many landowners in the county involving erosion, wildlife habitat and pond maintenance.

Fiscal Summary of Benefits to Greenville County Citizens

Construction	\$81,559
Education	\$15,881
Money disbursed through NRCS's EQIP program	\$114,715
Total	\$212,155

Farm Bill "helps people help the land"

The 2008 Farm Bill offers America's agricultural producers and nonindustrial private forest landowners more assistance than ever before to voluntarily conserve natural resources on our Nation's privately owned farm and ranch lands. Its provisions provide technical and financial assistance to help local producers implement conservation practices that reduce erosion, protect our waters, improve fish and wildlife habitat and improve air quality.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, NRCS develops contracts with agricultural producers to implement conservation practices to address natural resource problems. Payments are made to producers once conservation practices are completed according to NRCS requirements. For 2011, the sign up will end September 30, 2010.

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for developing or improving high quality habitat that supports fish and wildlife populations of national, state tribal or local significance. Through WHIP, the NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to private and tribal landowners for the development of upland, wetland aquatic and other types of wildlife habitat.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. CSP supports stewards of the land who want to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and enhancing, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land. Through CSP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will provide financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land.

Soil & Water Conservation District Staff



Pictured from left: JC Ward, Education Program Manager; Gene Dobbins, District Engineer; Kirsten Robertson, District 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



**GREENVILLE COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED