



# Conservation Digest

GREENVILLE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
FALL 2010



# Lowe's Grant Funds Grove Elementary Project

Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District selected Grove Elementary School to receive an Outdoor Learning Center for its students. This project would not have been possible without the support of our generous partners! Lowe's Toolbox for Education awarded \$5,000 in grant funding, covering plants, supplies and educational materials. Trees Greenville contributed a tree garden, educational presentations, technical assistance, and hard-working volunteers. Crow Dog Native Ferns and Community Lawn & Garden donated ferns and other plants for the gardens.

The completed project includes a native plant garden, sensory and herb garden, butterfly garden, Carolina Fence garden, seating area, and native rock display. More than 600 Grove Elementary students will benefit from environmental education programs utilizing this Outdoor Learning Center, which was recently designated as a "Certified Wildlife Habitat" by the National Wildlife Federation.



*More than 50 volunteers and staff worked to amend the poor soil before planting*



*Grove Elementary Science Lab Coordinator, Amy Dickert, puts finishing touches on a flower garden*



*GCSWCD Commissioner, Danny Howard, sampled soil to recommend amendments*



*Students in the afterschool "Garden Club" care for the gardens and spend time together in the seating area*



*GCSWCD Commissioner, Claire Bradbery, installed the posts for our Carolina Fence Garden*



*Volunteers of all ages pitched in to install gardens, signs, native ferns, and a native rock area*

# Y.E.S.: Appreciate Nature, Educate Others, Take Action!

Y.E.S., or Youth Environmental Stewardship, is an exciting new program for high school students. Y.E.S. introduces teens to the wonders of nature through a series of outdoor adventures, conservation action projects and environmental education activities. Y.E.S. team members have opportunities to lead hands-on environmental education activities for younger children through the Soil & Water Conservation District's existing education programs. Additionally, each year, the Y.E.S. team will work to develop, implement and evaluate a conservation action project to monitor and address important, local conservation issues.



The Y.E.S. program will have regular meetings or activities once per month from November through June on the third Saturday of the month. Y.E.S. includes overnight adventures, guided hikes and a conservation action project. All activities are led by experienced staff and guides.

Additional volunteer opportunities for special events, community service and special projects will be available to Y.E.S. team members throughout the year.

Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District is now accepting applications for Y.E.S.! Y.E.S. team members are selected through a competitive application and interview process. **Applications are due before November 1, 2010 at 5:00 PM.**

Y.E.S. Team Members are:

- ◆ 9th-12th graders in Greenville County
- ◆ available the third Saturday of each month (Nov.-June)
- ◆ committed to environmental conservation
- ◆ excited for new experiences

For applications and additional information, please contact the Education Department at [jcward@greenvillecounty.org](mailto:jcward@greenvillecounty.org) or call 864-467-2755 ext. 103

## 'Team Greenville' receives Honorable Mention in South Carolina 2010 Envirothon

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual SC Envirothon was held on May 7<sup>th</sup> at the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development. The Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District is pleased to announce that 'Team Greenville' students took home Honorable Mention, by placing in the top four teams at the competition. 'Team Greenville' is made up of students from Greenville County and is coached by Soil & Water District Manager, Kirsten Robertson. Students in the competition were tested on Aquatics, Forestry, Oral Presentation, the Protection of Groundwater through Urban, Agricultural and Environmental Planning, Soils, and Wildlife.

The overall competition winners, whose high scores landed them in the top four were: **Honorable Mention** – Team Greenville (Greenville County), **Third Place**, each member receiving a \$125 scholarship – Spartanburg Day School (Spartanburg County), **Second Place**, with each member receiving a \$250 scholarship – Spartanburg High School Team B, and **First Place**, each member receiving a \$500 scholarship – Spartanburg High School Team A (Spartanburg County). Spartanburg Team A moved on to compete at the national Canon Envirothon competition.

The event is a true model of partnership for a common cause: providing a challenging, but fun outdoor experience for high school students that will encourage them to be stewards of the land, not just with their hearts, but with their heads and with their hands.



From left: Coach Kirsten Robertson, Jon Albert, Dillard Robertson, Kevin Emery, Sally Anderson and Samantha Hauser



From left: Kevin Emery, Alberto Brando, Rebekah Doshier, Kevin Duda, Sally Anderson, Patrick Duda and SC DNR staff counselor Neil Bartley

## Greenville Students Attend SCINRC at Lander University

Six high school students were selected by the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District to attend the 2010 SC Institute for Natural Resource Conservation at Lander University (SCINRC).

Participants study forestry, aquatics, wildlife, soils and geology and participate in fishing, skeet shooting and canoeing. The program is engaging and educational, but is not all "fun and games". SCINRC provides students an opportunity to earn college credit for the week-long program. Following their studies and recreational activities, delegates are tested with a comprehensive exam. Those with qualifying scores earn college scholarships to study natural resource conservation.

GCSWCD Affiliate Member donations fund participation in the program. The 2010 SCINRC delegates were Sally Anderson from Southside High, Alberto Brando homeschooled, Rebekah Doshier from Greenville Tech Charter High, Kevin Duda from Wade Hampton High, Patrick Duda from Wade Hampton High, and Kevin Emery from Wade Hampton High.

Over the 30 year history of the institute, hundreds of students have earned more than \$70,000 in college scholarships. This year, Greenville County delegates, Sally Anderson and Kevin Emery, were awarded \$500 in college scholarship funds.

# Every Drop Counts South Carolina

Contributed by Anne Haueter,  
Pickens County Soil & Water Conservation District



*Program staff performing a catch cup test*



*Irrigation systems behind the Peace Center were checked as part of the program*



*Soil samples determine soil type and root depth*

The Pickens County Soil & Water Conservation District, in partnership with Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District (GSWCD), Anderson Soil & Water Conservation District (ASWCD), Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS), and participating Water Districts, is conducting the “Every Drop Counts South Carolina” irrigation check pilot program for the 2010 irrigation season.

“Every Drop Counts South Carolina” helps reduce outdoor water waste by providing free irrigation system checks to property owners within the service area of participating water districts. Once customers request the irrigation system check, trained Soil & Water Conservation District personnel visually inspect irrigation systems. Visual inspection of all sprinkler heads within the landscape is performed to: 1) identify head type such as rotor, fixed, or drip; 2) list damaged, misaligned, and/or other malfunctioning sprinkler heads; 3) look for signs of leaking heads or pipes; 4) inspect the control clock(s); 5) measure and record water pressure; and 6) note any other issues that negatively impact the efficiency of the system.

Following this, District personnel perform a catch cup test on representative zones to determine the distribution uniformity and precipitation rate of the respective areas. Distribution uniformity (DU) is a measurement of how evenly water is applied to the area being watered, expressed as a percentage. Precipitation rate (PR) is the amount of water emitted from an irrigation system and is measured in inches of water per hour. DU and PR directly influence the amount of water required to keep the landscape green. A soil sample is also collected to determine soil type and root depth. Staff compiles results from soil samples, water pressure tests, catch cup tests and visual site inspections. From the data, a recommended watering schedule for the zone(s) evaluated is determined, communicated to the property owner and may be implemented during a non-restrictive year.

With only minor improvements to most irrigation systems, sites could easily meet a 70% or better efficiency. Typically, if all conservation recommendations are implemented, overall outdoor irrigation system efficiency can be improved by an estimated 17% — helpful to any water customer, as well as the region’s water resources.

# Soil: Not Just Another Four-Letter Word

Contributed by Emory Holsonback,  
NRCS Resource Soil Scientist



What is soil? And before you say it, no, it's not dirt! Dirt is soil out of place, like on your hands or feet. Soil is the solid material on the Earth's surface that serves as a natural medium for the growth of plants.

Soil is not only necessary for our food production, but also for our clothing and shelter. Just think about the cotton used to make your shirt and jeans. Where did that cotton grow? What about the wood and bricks in your house?

Most of this is common knowledge. However, there may be many things about soils that you may not understand. There is a website with a plethora of soils information ranging from soil formation to soil songs. There are lesson plans for teachers and coloring pages for kids. You can find posters for your wall and experiments for all. You may be asking, "What is that web address?" It's not a secret, so I guess I will tell you. It is <http://soils.usda.gov/education>. Feel free to stop in and browse anytime.

## District Staff & Partners

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

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

# Affiliate Memberships

## Sponsor Education Programs



To become a member of the Greenville Soil & Water Conservation District, fill out the form below and return it with your **tax deductible** gift. Donations help the District award essay contest winners, provide environmental education presentations in schools, and sponsor delegates to the South Carolina Institute for Natural Resources.

Your gift helps the District educate the public about natural resource conservation, places your name on District newsletters and annual reports, and secures an invitation for you and a guest to our Annual Awards Banquet.



### Donate Today!

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Business Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address

\_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip

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E-mail

- Select a Category:  \$1000       \$750       \$500       \$200
- \$150       \$100       \$50       \$35

*Please make checks payable to Greenville County Soil & Water.*

**Return to: Greenville County Soil & Water,  
301 University Ridge, Ste. 4800, Greenville, SC 29601**

**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 Gible • 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**

*Strange Brothers Grading Co., Inc.*

**Sustaining – \$150**

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

**Associate – \$100**

*Dobbins Engineering, Inc.  
Mr. & Mrs. William H. Earle  
Dr. William Gressette  
Dr. & Mrs. Rob Hanley  
Butch & Diane Kirven  
Pecan Dale Farmstead  
Rogers, J.L. & Calcott Engineers, Inc.  
Charles & Martha Wright*

**Contributing - \$50**

*Bob & Claire Bradbery  
John & Teresia Case  
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Green Lake Properties  
Hayes Food Products  
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Grady & Mary Rose Jones  
Lynne Newton  
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J. Randall & Pat Wynn*

**Regular – \$35**

*Bob Jones University  
Cely Construction  
Danny Howard  
North Greenville University  
Melvin Pace, Pace Building Co.*

**In-kind Donors**

*Dr. John Hains  
Eliza & Rayna Holcombe  
South Carolina Native Plant Society  
TreesGreenville*

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