



GEORGETOWN SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

"promoting natural resource conservation through the use of public notification, conservation education, sound technical information, and direct personal assistance."



Pictured left to right: Associate Commissioner Elery Little, Chairman Mickey Lankford, Commissioners Wayne Avant, Nathaniel Ruth, Peggy Williams, Associate Commissioner Kenny Williams, and Commissioner Mark Johnson.

From our Commissioners—2008 in Review

As with most things in today's world, change continues to be a constant. The conservation District works to stay informed with new ideas in conservation and the ever changing world of technology. Managing a farm and planting a crop is no longer the simple task it may have been at one time. Our farmers must stay in touch with the technology available to stay competitive. Energy conservation has been the newest form of conservation added to the list of many. Precision Agriculture with Nutrient, and Pest Management, cropland soil types dictate the amount and placement of nutrients, pesticides and herbicides. Fields are not managed as one unit, but as many smaller units within one. These practices are not only able to provide savings in dollars, but also improve surface and ground water quality. We are also seeing precision equipment being added to tractors to reduce overlap and improve harvesting. With each foot of overlap reduced over several acres savings in fuel, nutrients, herbicides, and pesticides can be substantial, and with costs continuing to increase the benefits can be substantial. The

Conservation District continues to work with all aspects of conservation from educational programs in county schools and workshops for landowners to providing technical assistance and having partnerships with local government and private landowners.

Welcome Aboard, Krista!



We would like to welcome Krista Noel to our staff. Krista has a joint position as a Wildlife Biologist with USDA NRCS and SC Department of Natural Resources. Krista has a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Biology. She has worked throughout the Southeast with mammals and birds and has experience with herpetology, the study of reptiles and amphibians. Krista is assigned to Georgetown County but also works in Williamsburg, Clarendon, Dillon, Marion, Horry and Florence. Her duties include providing planning and technical assistance to landowners for farm bill Programs, such as the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Wetland Reserve Program.



EDUCATION

Envirothon Competition



Georgetown County was represented again in 2008 by a team from Andrews High School. Jackee Bender coached a team of 5 members on soils, water, forestry, wild-life, and current governmental issues to prepare for this competition. The team traveled to the Sandhills Research Center in Columbia to compete against other teams from around the state. The 2008 Envirothon Team members were: Amber King, Amanda Foy, Olivia Foy, Melissa Fuentes, and Whitney Elliott. The team is shown in the picture at the right taking a break after the competition.



South Carolina Institute for Natural Resource Conservation

Lander University in the upstate is the setting for one of the most exciting workshops offered to students. This weeklong environmental camp is open to juniors and seniors who express an interest in natural resources and attending college. Generally held in June of each year, the participants explore our state's natural resources, learn why and how conservation impacts our daily lives, and forge new friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. This camp is hosted by Lander University's College of Science and Mathematics and sponsored by the South Carolina Conservation District's Association and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Interested students should call the District office for more information.

Soils Kits for Kindergarten



The Georgetown Conservation District continues to provide Soils Kits to kindergarten classes in the county. Because of the similarity of objectives for this topic, some third grade teachers have shown an interest in the soil samples. The District will continue to provide the kits for education. The Soils Kits consist of a three ring binder that includes a five day lesson plan, clip art, games, and certificates along with a copy of the state standards for kindergarten and third grades. A CD is provided with all of this information. The soil samples are in individual zip lock bags with identification labels and are kept in a plastic box with a lid. Shown in the picture at the right is Kensington Elementary kindergarten teacher Scotty Poston, along with some of his students, discussing soil particle size.



2008 CONSERVATION DISTRICT ESSAY CONTEST FOR SEVENTH GRADE

The conservation district's 2008 essay contest was a huge success. The topic of the essay "*Drought Survival*" challenged the seventh graders to learn how drought conditions can affect everything. The winners and teachers from each school received cash awards at the May, 2008 District School Board Meeting. The 2008 Essay contest Winners were:



CARVERS BAY MIDDLE

Teacher: Samantha Bell
First Place: Tyler Pyatt
Second Place: Latrell Windley



GEORGETOWN MIDDLE

Teacher: Nina Runion
First Place: Halli Daniel
Second Place: Sara Wood



ROSEMARY MIDDLE

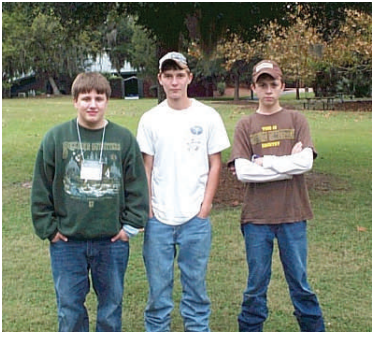
Teacher: Barbara Player
First Place: Tyler Ray
Second Place: Joseph Altman



WACCAMAW MIDDLE

Teacher: Kathie Rasheed
First Place: Van Dim
Second Place: Grace Barnett

Carolina Coastal Adventure



The Carolina Coastal Adventure is an educational experience focused on freshwater and marine resources and is open to any 9th and 10th grade students. It is held in Pinopolis in Berkeley County, at the Somerset Facility on Lake Moultrie, in the fall of each year. The goal of this educational workshop is to help each student realize that healthy aquatic ecosystems are valuable resources that provide human communities with clean water, food, recreation, and unique cultural traditions. Activities include classroom instruction in water quality analysis and watersheds, canoeing in a cypress swamp at Old Santee Canal Park, and a tour of the Jeffries Steam Plant on the Tail Race Canal. Representing Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District at the 2008 Carolina Coastal Adventure were Jack Christianson from Georgetown High, Timothy Owens and John Willocks from Carvers Bay High.

South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture

The SCCSA is open for all 10th, 11th and 12th grade students who have a genuine interest in pursuing a college degree relating to Agriculture, Natural Resources, and related sciences. *"The South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture is a premier career and leadership development summer program that informs, inspires and challenges student participants to consider a career in agricultural, natural resource and life science industries, and to be model citizens of leadership and influence these industries as they embrace an agriculturalist philosophy."* The primary goal of the SCCSA is to increase students' understanding and appreciation of South Carolina's second largest industry and the people, products and career opportunities available in this industry. Also, students are exposed to the processes and requirements for college applications, financial aid requests, career development, communication and leadership.

2008 Conservation Scholarships

2008 marked the beginning of what we hope will be many years of offering Conservation Scholarships for deserving seniors in Georgetown County. The District was fortunate to award three \$500.00 scholarships for students that were interested in continuing their education in conservation or natural resources. These students had to meet several criteria along with submission of an essay and recent transcript. The 2008 Scholarship recipients are: Matthew Michau from Andrews High School - Forestry/Wildlife Management at Horry-Georgetown Technical College; Garrett Swann and Jacob Mears from Georgetown high School - Wildlife and Fisheries Biology at Clemson University.



Pictured at left: Matthew Michau with his parents, Elwood and Karen, and Commissioner Nathaniel Ruth



Pictured left to Right: Chairman Mickey Lankford, Jacob Mears and his parents, Joel and Beth Mears..

Garrett Swann with his parents, Neal and Susan, and Commissioner Mickey Lankford.



Classroom Presentations

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Natural Resources, Clemson Extension, and the Conservation District make classroom presentations at the request of schools throughout the year. Programs are presented on various topics concerning soil and water conservation to seventh graders. The goal of these classroom visits is to make the students more aware of their responsibility as future landowners and land users.

DISTRICT NEWS

Winyah Bay Heritage Festival



The Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District has participated in the Winyah Bay Heritage Festival since its first year in 2007. The Winyah Bay Heritage Festival, which was held in January of 2008, pays tribute to the outdoor lifestyle of the Lowcountry with emphasis on hunting, fishing, and conservation in Georgetown County. The goals of the Festival are to conserve the natural resources of the Winyah Bay area, to promote and perpetuate the area's heritage and to generate income for the Georgetown County Historical Society to expand its Winyah Bay area collection. This is accomplished by offering a weekend full of exhibits, vendors, speakers and good fun for everyone. The picture at left shows the display used by the District for this event.

Landowner Workshop

Georgetown Conservation District partnered with the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District and H&S Oil Company to sponsor a Biodiesel Information Workshop in March of 2008. This workshop was held at Kenny's Bar-B-Que in Hemingway, SC. There were approximately 80 people from Georgetown, Florence, Horry and Williamsburg Counties who attended this workshop and lunch. Topics included Properties and Use of Biodiesel, Equipment and Equipment Needs, Tax Credit Information, Cost-share programs and much more. Speakers for this workshop were representatives from Foothills Bio-Energies/Verde Bio Fuels, Inc., Kennedy & Sparrow Tractor Company, SC Energy Office, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service. The picture to the right shows Trinette Vereen, District Conservationist for Williamsburg County, handing out information at the workshop.



2008 Pee Dee Area Meeting

The 2008 Pee Dee Area Meeting was hosted by Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District. The meeting started with tours of Black River Bluffs and Scotswood Plantation where Krista Noel, Biologist with SCDNR/NRCS and Kenny Williams, Associate Commissioner in Georgetown County, spoke about the ecology of bluffs, bottomlands, and longleaf pine uplands. A variety of quail habitat management techniques were discussed and viewed on the properties. After the tours, everyone met back at the Millwood Community Center for a meal catered by Brown's Barbeque in Kingstree.

Phragmites Control Program Expanded

The highly successful Phragmites Control Program co-sponsored by the Georgetown Conservation District, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Clemson Extension, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Historic Ricefields Association, and the S.C. Nature Conservancy will have cost-share monies for 2008. Limited funding will also be available for 2009. Landowners who would like to apply for the Phragmites Cost-Share should contact the District Office for applications.

No-Till Grain Drill



The district now has two no-till grain drills for rent. Along with the UFT Grain Drill, that is used for planting pastures, we now have a John Deere 10' Grain Drill that can be rented for planting cropland. Both drills are located at the Munnerlyn Farm in the Rose Hill Section of Georgetown County. Rental Fees are \$7.00 per acre for the UFT Drill and \$9.00 per acre for the John Deere Drill. Call the District Office for more information.

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Conservation Technical Assistance

The Natural Resources Conservation Service works in partnership with the Conservation District and the SC Department of Natural Resources to provide technical assistance to landowners of Georgetown County as well as local Government. Assistance includes conservation planning and application and the potential for cost share assistance through available programs. In 2008, conservation practices were applied on over 4,700 acres. All landowners in Georgetown County are eligible for assistance.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



EQIP provides cost share assistance to install conservation practices on eligible land. Pasture planting, fencing, heavy use areas for livestock, wells for livestock use, and precision agriculture for nutrient management are just a few of the practices available for cost share assistance. In 2008, 5 contracts were approved for funding. The picture to the right shows an installed fence completed by Baxley Farms.

The picture to the right shows an installed fence completed by Baxley Farms.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

WHIP provides cost share assistance for wildlife habitat improvements. Eligible land includes forest land and cropland. Practices available include prescribed burning, permanent firebreaks, native grasses, trees and shrubs, control of invasive species and trunks for wetland habitat management. In 2008, 3 contracts were approved and funded.



Prescribed Burn at Mt. Pleasant Plantation

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

This program is an easement program which restores and protects altered wetlands. In 2008, over 2400 acres were funded and restored.

RC&D– Resource Conservation and Development

Small Farmer Initiative:

The Santee Wateree RC&D completed its final year of the Small Farmer Grant which enabled them to provide installation of plastic drip irrigation for several small farmers in the Council area. The majority of the plastic installed was for vegetable crops. The Georgetown County Farmers Market continues to be a successful outlet for their products.

Dry Hydrants:

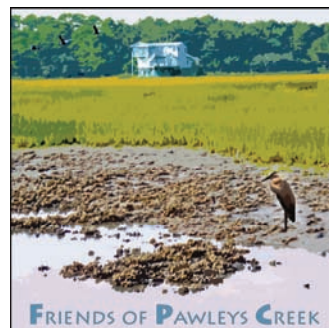
Technical assistance for the design and installation of Dry Hydrants is provided to Georgetown County Fire Department with Georgetown County Public Works providing the equipment and labor to install the systems. Dry Hydrants provide an access to a water source for fire protection. Hydrants are installed in private ponds for use by the surrounding community in case of fire. The dry hydrant shown below is located at Rural Hall Plantation. The hydrant head was painted to blend in with the surrounding area.



Dry Hydrant at Rural Hall Plantation

Outreach Farm Garden:

The Conservation District continues to provide technical and financial support for the boys at Tara Hall garden. Each year a fall and summer garden are planted at the farm. In 2009, plans are to help with a greenhouse which will be located at Tara Hall.



Litchfield/Pawleys Creek 319 Grant:

The Santee-Wateree Council has been awarded a grant to provide education and cost share assistance to the Pawleys Creek Watershed area. Plans are to locate and provide assistance to homeowners for failing septic systems, as well as pet waste stations and other water quality practices. For more information, visit www.FriendsofPawleysCreek.com or call the District Office at (843) 546-7808.

2008 AFFILIATE BANQUET

The Georgetown Soil & Water Conservation District honored its affiliate members with their Annual Banquet on October 23, 2008. Sam Ward once again prepared a meal of barbeque chicken with all the trimmings. Awards and door prizes were given to the lucky winners. Also recognized were the county students who participated in the educational programs sponsored by the district. The District would like to extend our appreciation to the following for the door prize contributions: Santee Electric Cooperative, Ducks Unlimited, Backwoods Quail Club, Earl Holtzscheiter, Carolina Exterminators, and Saw Mill Pond Vineyards.

Wildlife Conservation of the Year - Rubeth Earl Williams



L to R: Associate Commissioner Kenny Williams presenting award to Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams' passion for the outdoors and wildlife enhancement on his beautiful farm in the western part of Georgetown County is unsurpassed. He is very conservation oriented. He has implemented quality deer management on his entire acreage. He intensely manages an extremely large beaver pond for waterfowl along with his shallow water area for wildlife, practice CP-9, under the conservation reserve program. He continues to participate in practice CP-10, Trees Already Established, under CRP as well. With this wildlife enhancement, he now has a large number of turkeys and native coveys of bobwhite quail throughout his farm. His well maintained 20 acre fish pond adds scenic beauty to the homestead as well as extensive fish production and major breeding areas for Canada Geese. Mr. Williams participates in NRCS and FSA programs seeking ways to continue building the wildlife haven that he and his sons have created.

Conservation Farmer of the Year - Wardie Collins

Mr. Collins is truly a man whose farming focus this past year has been concentrated on ways to reduce tillage, save fuel, enhance wildlife, and improve soil productivity all while trying to obtain maximum yields. He double cropped over 200 acres of cropland which included double cropped no till soybeans behind wheat. He continues to plant cotton acreage where he uses minimal tillage depending on soil moisture. He works with landowners who participate in CRP to comply with their Conservation Plan of operation by maintaining quail buffers, filter strips and riparian buffers. Perhaps one of his greatest assets is the fact that he is a producer concerned with soil quality. He continues to perform crop rotation on a steady, scheduled plan which no doubt reduces soil born diseases, decreases nematode build up and improves soil productivity to maximum levels. He remains mindful of wildlife enhancement which coincides with his farming operation helping to sustain the native wildlife species while continuing to produce quality crops. He is also a man of few words who lets his outstanding work speak for itself.



L to R: Commissioner Wayne Avant with Wardie Collins.

Conservation Educator of the Year - Jack Whetstone



Jack Whetstone, the District's Conservation Educator for 2008, is a Clemson University aquatic specialist. Anyone that has a pond or has association with ponds know Jack. He is an associate professor at the Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science. He was recognized with this award for his dedicated leadership in natural resource education. Jack has worked for Clemson University in Georgetown for 29 years where he has provided technical advice and shared his experience with thousands of people across the state. Jack has provided instruction for eight multi-county pond clinics, runs workshops for pesticide applicators to maintain their certification and conducts in-service training on pond management for county agents. The District is very fortunate to have an educator like Jack Whetstone who is very dedicated and experienced.

DOOR PRIZE WINNERS



Rubeth Earl and Patsy Williams, long time affiliate members of the Georgetown Conservation district, were the winners of the Grand Prize at the 2008 Affiliate Banquet. The Duck Print was donated by Ducks Unlimited. Other door prizes donated were umbrella, radio and crock pot by Santee Electric Cooperative; blender, coolers, flashlights and 1-year quarterly pest control by Carolina Exterminators; Gift Certificate from Backwoods Quail Club; sweet potatoes by Earl Holtzscheiter; and baskets of Jellies and cider from Saw Mill Pond Vineyard. Thanks to all who contributed items for door prizes!

2008 AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Fitz Allison
Bates Hill Plantation
Baxley Farms
Robbie & Renee Boykin
Bordeaux-Clark Group, Inc.
Herbert Butler
Cagle Construction
Capps Farm
Charles Ingram Lumber Company
Ron Charlton
Clermont Plantation
James O. Creel
Lonnie Creel
Bob Cribb
Samuel O. Cribb

Robert Delapp III
Dover Plantation
H.E. Hemingway
Edward Hickson
W. Sherwyn Jacobs
Low Country Forest Products
James W. Moody
Mossdale Plantation
Mt. Pleasant Plantation
Kyle Daniel
Jeffrey T. Owens
Legrand Owens
Martin Owens
Phil Owens
Tommy Owens

Truitt Owens
Prevatte & Associates
Wendell Powers
Bob F. Roberts
Roberts Paper Tubes
Santee Cooper
Santee Electric Cooperative
Samuel K. Squires
Stephen R. Squires
Town of Pawleys Island
Wallace & Mary Catherine Vaught
R.E. & Patsy Williams

****SILENT MEMBERS**

PLEASE GIVE! It rewards Everyone—including YOURSELF!

Funding for the Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District is provided strictly from affiliate membership dues, county funding, and state funding. The primary use of all funding is to provide the district office and board of commissioners with secretarial services, sponsor district projects such as conservation field days, youth workshops, educational seminars, and promote conservation stewardship. This means that they are able to go out and help educate **YOU** and **YOUR children** about the conservation world. Everyone is invited to be a member of this organization, *including YOU.*

If you want to be a part of something that will benefit you and the people around you, call the district office today and ask how you can become a member!



Georgetown Conservation District

Commissioners

Mickey D. Lankford, Jr., Chairman
Mark Johnson, Vice Chairman
Peggy Williams, Sec./Treasurer
Wayne Avant
Nathaniel Ruth

Associate Commissioners

Elery L. Little
Kenny Williams

District Staff

Robin S. Munnerlyn, District Coordinator
Debbie Mann, District Conservationist, USDA-NRCS
Sam Ward, SC DNR-LWCD
Krista Noel, SC DNR & NRCS Wildlife Biologist

The Georgetown Conservation District Commissioner's board meeting will be the third Monday of each month unless otherwise noted. Each meeting begins at 11:00 am in the USDA Service Center Conference Room at 1837 North Fraser Street. The public is cordially invited to attend. For more information, please call the District office at (843) 546-7808 extension 3 for more information.

MISSION STATEMENT...

Promote natural resource conservation through the use of public notification, conservation education, sound technical information, and direct personal assistance.

The Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, and disability.



Georgetown Soil & Water
Conservation District
1837 North Fraser Street
Georgetown, SC 29440