

Fall 2011



RICHLAND COUNTY

# Soil & Water Conservation District

## Environmental Planning Division Reorganization and Staff Changes

Richland County has formed a new Environmental Planning Division to support programs of the Richland County Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD), the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC), and the Planning and Developmental Services Department. The Division's responsibilities include providing environmental and conservation expertise in support of the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Strategic Plan, and Neighborhood Master Plans. In addition, the Division will continue providing technical and educational staff support to the numerous programs of the RSWCD and the RCCC, including agricultural soil and water conservation, conservation easements, historical restoration, greenways and trails, mitigation banking, and watershed and water quality protection projects.

James B. Atkins (Buddy) joined the Environmental Planning staff in December 2010 as Manager of the Environmental Planning Division. He fills the vacant position of Hugh Caldwell, who worked with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and served as RSWCD Conservationist for the past decade. Buddy brings 35 years of experience to the position and formerly served as a Commissioner on the SC Public Service Commission, a Research Professor at USC (Earth Sciences & Resources Institute), and an Extension Specialist at NC State University (Agricultural Engineering Dept.). Buddy holds a Ph.D. in Marine Science/Oceanography from USC and an M.S. in Environmental Systems Engineering from Clemson.

Nancy Stone-Collum was hired (effective March 7, 2011) as the Division's Conservation Coordinator. Nancy has assumed the responsibilities of Jim Wilson, who retired in January after 40 years of service to the USDA and Richland County. Nancy earned a M.P.H degree from USC and brings over 25 years of conservation and historic preservation experience to the position. She was formerly the Deputy Director of the Palmetto Conservation Foundation. Nancy's primary responsibilities focus on the Conservation Commission's programs.



Chanda Cooper joined the RSWCD in May as its new Education Program Coordinator. Chanda holds a B.S. in Biology and a Master of Earth and Environmental Resources Management, both from USC. For the past two years, she served as the Naturalist and Environmental Educator at the Carolina Children's Garden, Conservation Station, and Clemson University Sandhill Research and Education Center in northeast Columbia; Collections Manager at the USC Herbarium; and a consultant for the USC Center for Science Education. Chanda has assumed the duties of Mary Jane Henderson, who retired in March, 2011. Mary Jane worked as the RSWCD Education Specialist for almost 28 years, and she received both regional and national recognition for her work in conservation education.

### Contact Us

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## Meet New RSWCD Board Member Mark Huguley



Mark W. Huguley was elected in November, 2010 as the newest member of the RSWCD Board.

Mark retired from law enforcement and intelligence service in 2010. He served with the SC Law Enforcement Division (SLED) from 1975 to 1996 and from 1998 to 2004, retiring as an Assistant Director with the rank of Major. He also worked as a Supervisory Intelligence Analyst with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and served as a Deputy Director in Charge of Law Enforcement for the SC Department of Natu-

ral Resources (SCDNR).

Since retiring, Mark continues to pursue his life-long interest in, and commitment to, conservation by volunteering at Congaree National Park and serving on the RSWCD Board. His conservation interests were recently influenced by concern for water quality derived from participation with the Gill's Creek Watershed Association. In December, 2010, Huguley established a small threat assessment company, Huguley and Associates, LLC, to provide consultation and analysis in workplace violence and domestic abuse.

## Conservation Station at Sandhill



*Guided nature walks provide an introduction to local flora and fauna.*

The Conservation Station at the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center in Northeast Columbia is an outdoor

education center sponsored by the RSWCD. It is comprised of six outdoor classrooms situated along a half-mile nature trail. Each outdoor

classroom is dedicated to one of six areas of conservation: water, air, soil, geology, forestry, and wildlife.

Opened in 1998, the Station has long been a fixture of education at the Clemson Sandhill campus. Currently, education programming at the Station is being conducted by the RSWCD with partial funding provided by a Community Conservation Grant from the Richland County Conservation Commission.

Since January, conservation education programs have been presented

to over 2,000 students and 600 adults through the Conservation Station.

For information about the programs or to schedule a field trip for your class or small group, visit [www.sandhillconservationstation.blogspot.com/](http://www.sandhillconservationstation.blogspot.com/).



## Nature-Based Inquiry Partnership with USC

This summer, the RSWCD provided technical and administrative support to a USC project designed to empower early childhood educators to establish and use outdoor classrooms.

The project, now in its fourth year of funding, is called the Nature-Based Inquiry Project and is spearheaded by researchers in the Center for Science Education and the College of Education at USC.

Three summer institutes were held for participating teachers.

Chanda Cooper, Education Program Coordinator for the RSWCD,

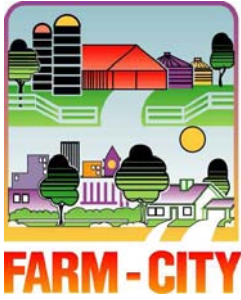
served as the project's naturalist and assisted with planning and project assessments. "Taking the teachers into the field each day and helping them see the potential that even a commonplace environment, like a school playground, holds for meaningful scientific inquiry was very rewarding," Cooper said.

Teachers use dichotomous keys to identify macroinvertebrates at this July 2011 Nature-Based Inquiry Institute.



Funding for the project was provided by an Improving Teacher Quality grant from the SC Commission on Higher Education.

## 2011 Richland County Farm-City Week



Since 1955, the national Farm-City Council has promoted awareness of the interdependence between farms and cities.

Each year, the President of the

United States proclaims the week leading up to Thanksgiving as Farm-City Week, and communities across the nation celebrate the importance of agriculture and the connections between rural and urban areas.

This year, Farm-City Week will be

observed **November 18th - 24th**. In conjunction with National Farm-City Week, the Richland County Farm-City Committee is sponsoring a series of competitions for Richland County K-12 students. The topic for the 2011 Richland County Farm-City Week is Sustainable Agriculture.

In addition to the competitions, the RSWCD is sponsoring a \$500 scholarship for a senior who plans to pursue a career in conservation.

Richland County students are eligible to participate, and there are cash prizes for students and teachers in each grade level. The deadline for contest

### COMPETITIONS

Grades K-2: Bulletin Board Contest

Grades 3-5: Essay Contest

Grades 6-8: Poster Contest

Grades 9-12: Video Contest

Senior: Senior Scholarship

submissions is October 28th. For complete details, rules, and entry forms, visit [www.richlandonline.com/farmcity](http://www.richlandonline.com/farmcity).

## South Carolina Conservation Districts Youth Workshop



*Jessica (center) on a recent mission trip to Nicaragua*

Spring Valley High School

senior Jessica Woodford attended the 2011 SC Conservation Districts Youth Workshop as this year's RSWCD representative.

The Workshop, an annual week-long event held at Lander University, pro-

vides students the opportunity to engage in environmental studies led by conservation professionals and Lander University faculty.

Jessica reports that the Workshop was a wonderful experience: "The people teaching were wonderful; the classes were wonderful. It was a lot of fun." Her favorite sessions were chemistry, physics, and evening Lake Nights. She also en-

*In addition to the educational experiences, the Workshop's dining options received high praise: "They served the best barbeque I've ever*

*had in my life!"*

*-Jessica Woodford*

joyed spending time at Lander University, sleeping in the dorms, and getting a taste of college life.

In addition to her interests in conservation, Jessica participates in her school's orchestra

and is the president of a club called Circle of Friends that works to bridge the gap between mainstream and special education students. She plans to attend college and hopes to become a Special Education teacher.

## Green Steps Schools

The Green Steps Schools program, sponsored by Sonoco Recycling, Keep the Midlands Beautiful, and DHEC, encourages schools to take annual steps toward environmental responsibility.

To receive certification as a Green Steps School, schools must form a Green Team or Teams, attend a training session, and design and implement projects in three areas of environmental stewardship—conserve, protect, and restore.

Mentors are assigned to each school project to serve as advisors and assistants. RSWCD staff are happy to serve as mentors for many of these projects at Richland County schools. Schools currently being mentored include Forest Heights Elementary, the Columbia Jewish Day School, Round Top Elementary, and Longleaf Middle School.

At present, only two schools in South Carolina have attained the full Green Steps Certification: Conder Elementary

School and Pine Ridge Middle School.

For information about how to participate in the Green Steps program, visit [www.greenstepschools.com](http://www.greenstepschools.com).



# District Events



*District Staff made a school gardening presentation to teachers, school administrators, and food service professionals at the Midlands Farm to School Action Institute in June.*



*The RSWCD hosted two tables and an interactive exhibit at Richland 101 for Kids at the Dutch Square Mall in July.*

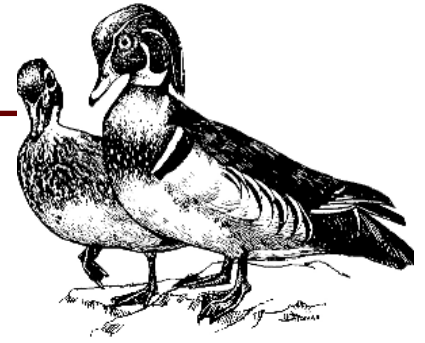
*Chanda Cooper (far right) demonstrates the movement of water and pollutants through a watershed to two young participants at the 2nd Annual Summer Celebration of Water (SCOW) in August. The SCOW is hosted by Richland and Lexington Counties and the City of Columbia.*



*Staff co-led an Outdoor Classroom workshop and made a brief presentation in a Green Steps Schools workshop at the 2011 Environmental Education Association of South Carolina (EEASC) Conference at Camp St. Christopher in June.*



## SCDNR Revives Wood Duck Box Program



SCDNR, in partnership with the State Chapter of Ducks Unlimited and the SC Department of Corrections, will resume the construction and distribution of wood duck boxes this winter. Applications are available at [www.scdnr.gov](http://www.scdnr.gov). Contact James Rader at (843) 844-8957 or [wodubox@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:wodubox@dnr.sc.gov) for more details. The deadline for applications is October 15, 2011.

### Meeting Notice

*The Richland Conservation District Board Meeting will be the second Monday of each month at Lizard's Thicket, 402 Beltline Blvd., Columbia, SC.*

*Each meeting begins at 6:30 PM.*

*The public is cordially invited to attend.*

*For information call 803-576-2080.*

## Upcoming: Beaver and Feral Hog Management Workshop Wednesday, November 9th, 2011



The population increase and range expansion of invasive feral hogs in the Southeastern United States is a serious concern for natural resource managers. Feral hogs can disrupt natural ecosystems, negatively impact native flora and fauna, and affect economically valuable commodities.

Similarly, while beavers are native to SC and create habitats that are beneficial to many wildlife species, their damming activities often directly conflict with the economic interests of landowners and agriculturists, as well as with infrastructure such as roads and bridges.

Do you have a problem with feral

### Save the Date

***Beaver & Hog Management Workshop***

***November, 9th, 2011***

***9:00am–1:00pm***

***Tri-County Electric Cooperative***

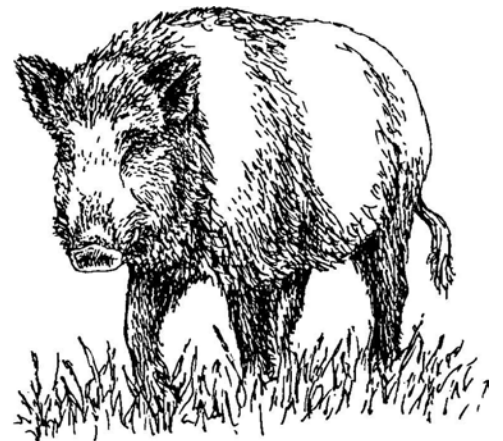
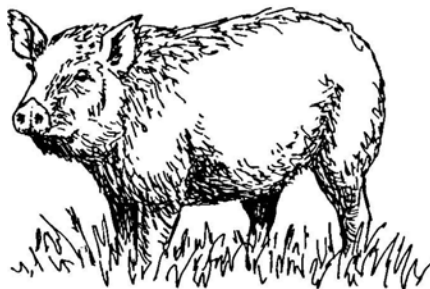
***6473 Old State Rd., St. Matthews***

***Call 803-576-2080 for more details***

hogs and/or beavers on your property? If so, the upcoming Beaver and Feral Hog Management Workshop is for you!

Natural resource conservation professionals will present information about the biology of these species as well as current management techniques.

Save the date, and please call the District at 803-576-2080 for more information.



# Become an Affiliate Member

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**Affiliate Members are a vital part of our conservation team. The monetary support given by Affiliates helps us carry out many of our conservation and stewardship programs within the County. Please support our efforts by becoming an Affiliate Member today! Simply fill out and return the following form to:**

**Richland Soil and Water Conservation District  
2020 Hampton Street, Rm. 3063A  
Columbia, SC 29204**

I would like to become an Individual/Corporate sponsor of the RSWCD (check one):

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate Member              | \$25        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Affiliate Member | \$50        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsoring Affiliate Member   | \$75        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Affiliate Member   | \$100       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Corporate Member | \$100-999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Corporate Member   | \$1000-5000 |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, St., Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Your contribution is tax deductible!*

## **Richland Soil & Water Conservation District**

### **Commissioners**

John Green, Chair  
Mark Huguley, Vice-Chair  
Kenneth Mullis, Secretary/Treasurer  
Heath Hill  
Hemphill Pride, III

### **Associate Commissioners**

Jeff Laney  
Mary Burts  
Jim Rhodes

### **Chaplain**

Ross D. Beard

### **District Staff**

James B. Atkins, Ph.D., Environmental Division Manager  
Chanda L. Cooper, Education Program Coordinator  
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant

Special thanks to our newest  
affiliate members!

*Piggly Wiggly  
Colliers International  
Mason and Ann Summers*

**We're on the Web!**

**<http://www.richlandonline.com/departments/Conservation/conservation.htm>**

*The USDA prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age and disability.*