

A group of cows of various colors (black, brown, and white) are standing in a lush green field. In the background, there is a dense line of trees under a cloudy sky. A dark blue semi-transparent banner is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the title text.

South Carolina Conservation Districts **2025 Annual Report**

Overview

The South Carolina Conservation Districts 2025 Annual Report is a comprehensive set of accomplishments by South Carolina Conservation Partnership including the 46 South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts (districts), the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources – Conservation Districts (SCDNR-Conservation Districts), the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD), the South Carolina Conservation Districts Foundation (SCCDF), and the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). This report highlights conservation implementation, economic impact, education, outreach, and dedicated service to the citizens and natural resources of South Carolina.

Each local Soil and Water Conservation District within South Carolina is charged with promoting the wise use of soil and water within their respective counties that are governed by a board of five voluntary commissioners. Each local district is the front-line advocate for locally led conservation within every county in South Carolina.

Since 1937, the South Carolina Conservation Partnership has worked to promote and establish the wise use of soil and water resources on the land. Together, this partnership makes a significant impact and serves as champions for conservation!

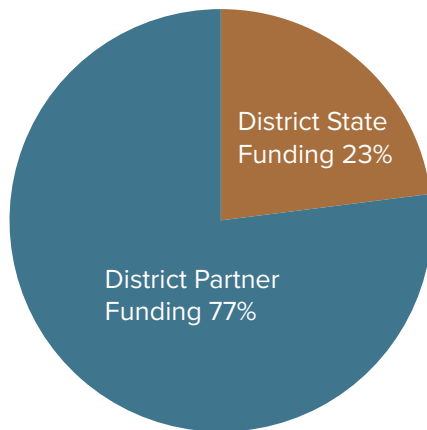
Table of Contents

Overview	1	Cherokee.....	19	Lee	39
Statewide Reports		Chester	20	Lexington.....	40
Conservation District Impact.....	2	Chesterfield	21	Marion	41
SCDNR-CD.....	3	Clarendon.....	22	Marlboro	42
SC Envirothon	4	Colleton	23	McCormick.....	43
SCACD	5	Darlington.....	24	Newberry.....	44
SCCDF	6	Dillon.....	25	Oconee	45
Watershed Districts	7	Dorchester	26	Orangeburg	46
USDA-NRCS	8	Edgefield	27	Pickens.....	47
District Reports		Fairfield	28	Richland.....	48
Abbeville	9	Florence.....	29	Saluda	49
Aiken	10	Georgetown.....	30	Spartanburg.....	50
Allendale	11	Greenville	31	Sumter.....	51
Anderson.....	12	Greenwood.....	32	Union	52
Bamberg.....	13	Hampton.....	33	Williamsburg.....	53
Barnwell.....	14	Horry.....	34	York.....	54
Beaufort.....	15	Jasper.....	35	SCACD Awards.....	55
Berkeley	16	Kershaw	36	Reference Materials	
Calhoun	17	Lancaster.....	37	Acronyms	57
Charleston.....	18	Laurens	38	Contacts.....	58

South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts

2025 Impact

State FY26 Conservation District Funding



For every \$1 of state appropriated funds to Conservation Districts, \$3.33 on average is leveraged to implement conservation programs in South Carolina.

Conservation Districts assist with United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) Farm Bill Programs, which brought more than **\$51.7 million** to South Carolina's private lands for conservation implementation, impacting nearly **206,090 South Carolina acres** in federal FY25.

More than 31,000 students were reached by conservation district youth-oriented programs such as school gardening, seed libraries, SC Envirothon, Arbor Day and Earth Day events, stormwater education, scholarships, and conservation related contests, etc.

More than 300,000 adults were educated on conservation topics including Farm Bill Programs, pollinator promotion, stormwater mitigation, invasive species control, prescribed fire, water quality and conservation, habitat restoration, land easements, etc.

More than 11,600 acres statewide were impacted by conservation rental equipment and programs available through conservation districts (no-till drills, prescribed fire equipment, hog traps, etc.).

SC Envirothon State Champions from Spartanburg High School represented South Carolina at the 2025 international NCF-Envirothon Competition in Alberta, Canada competing against teams from the US, Canada, China, and Singapore.

Programs involving land easements, habitat restoration, invasive species removal, water conservation, watershed improvement, litter removal, and conservation education are just a handful of the vast conservation topics implemented statewide by South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Conservation Districts

SC Conservation Districts Training Program

In early 2025, the SCDNR-Conservation Districts team launched the new SC Conservation Districts Training Certification Program! This program was created 100% in-house for free and serves as an easily accessible, comprehensive training for districts. This was a much needed resource for districts and serves as a one-stop shop for training materials and a library of critical documents and resources. The training can be taken individually or in a group, can be taken online via videos or via reading materials, and is broken into modules that take on average 20 minutes to complete, with the whole training taking approximately 4 hours. This program was presented nationally at the National Association of State Conservation Agencies Annual Meeting by Conservation District Area Coordinators and has since been referenced by many other states nationwide in development of their state district training programs.

In the first year, over 85% of districts have at least started the training with 16 districts becoming fully certified. To be certified, all commissioners and employees of the district must complete the training. Districts were honored with locally sourced plaques and hand-turned bowls to commemorate becoming certified. Clarendon Soil and Water Conservation District was the first in the state to become fully certified (below left)!



SCDNR-Conservation Districts Team Growth

The SCDNR-Conservation Districts team added a new role dedicated to program development. Jessica Egan, previously served as the East Piedmont Conservation Districts Coordinator, moved into this new role. This position will serve to enhance the SC Envirothon program and other statewide programs as well as increase resources to districts. Jessica will have a profound impact on telling the Conservation Districts story more effectively to expand reach and promote the wise use of soil and water in South Carolina!

Other Notable Accomplishments

The Field Operations Team created and implemented a Conservation Districts New Employee Onboarding program and have led 13 new employees through the program this year.

Jessica Egan, Program Development Coordinator, received the Clemson CAFLS Young Alumni Award!

Tyler Brown, Program Manager, delivered the keynote address at the North Carolina Conservation Districts Employee Annual Training.

Brooke Myres, Field Operations Manager, presented about the Local Work Group strides of South Carolina at the Alabama Conservation Districts Annual Meeting.



SC Envirothon

2025 SC Envirothon Results

1st Place Overall: Spartanburg High School Team 2
2nd Place Overall: Spartanburg Day School Team A
3rd Place Overall: Spartanburg Day School Team B

Aquatics Station 1st Place: Spartanburg High School Team 2
Current Topic Station 1st Place: Spartanburg Day School Team B
Forestry Station 1st Place: Spartanburg High School Team 2
Oral Presentation Station 1st Place: Dutch Fork High School Envirothon Club
Soils Station 1st Place: Spartanburg High School Team 2
Wildlife Station 1st Place: Spartanburg High School Team 1



NCF-Envirothon Competition

Spartanburg High School represented South Carolina at the international NCF Envirothon Competition in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The South Carolina State Champions competed against 51 teams from the US, Canada, China, and Singapore in an intense week-long environmental competition. The team had the opportunity to learn about and explore local ecosystems, visit Banff National Park, and experience local cultural traditions.



Coach Resources

SC Envirothon is excited to continue to expand resources to allow coaches to better train their students. This year a hands-on learning session was hosted for students as well as classroom sets developed to increase the accessibility of tools for continued hands-on learning.

Support SC Envirothon

SC Envirothon is a hands-on, environmental competition for high school students made possible only by the generous contributions of time and money from Hampton Wildlife Fund, SCDNR-Conservation Districts, SCCDF, and various other businesses, individuals, agencies, and groups. Please consider supporting this worthy cause!

For more information about SC Envirothon or to become a sponsor, reach out to Jessica Egan (eganj@dnr.sc.gov).



South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts

Feral Swine Exclusion Fence Program

Feral swine are one of South Carolina's most destructive wildlife species, causing widespread damage to crops, pasture, and natural resources. South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) has received funding through the National Association of Conservation District's (NACD) Feral Swine Exclusion Fencing Grant to help South Carolina landowners through cost share of fence installation to keep destructive feral swine off their property. This program offers direct support to landowners in high-impact areas looking for long-term solutions. All counties are eligible to participate. Additional information about this program can be found on SCACD's website: scacd.org/feral-hog-exclusion-fencing/



Conservation Districts Day at the State House

On March 4, 2025, SCACD ascended with district commissioners, employees, and partners to the SC State House to visit with State Legislators during Conservation Districts Day. The Association focused on educating legislators on districts and expressing gratitude for support. SCACD is grateful for the General Assembly's support of South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



2025 Highlights

Hosted the 83rd Annual South Carolina Conservation Partnership Conference in Spartanburg, SC.

Convened a one-day Policy Committee meeting to review and update supported initiatives and district operations.

Continued to manage a Contribution Agreement with USDA-NRCS to coordinate technical and administrative assistance on USDA-NRCS contracts.

Began managing the Cooperative Agreement with USDA-NRCS for increasing awareness of conservation programs.

Monitored legislation of the State Legislature related to Soil and Water Conservation and educated districts accordingly.

Supported district commissioner representatives on each of the River Basin Advisory Councils.



South Carolina Conservation Districts Foundation

SC Soil and Water Stewardship Week Field Day

The South Carolina Conservation Districts Foundation prioritizes funding conservation education. This year the foundation fully sponsored the 2025 SC Soil and Water Stewardship Week Field Day with the theme 'Home is Where the Habitat is' which celebrated the essential role that both natural and managed habitats play in supporting biodiversity. The field day was hosted by SCDNR-Conservation Districts at Belfast Wildlife Management Area in Kinards, SC. The field day offered participants an opportunity to experience the property as they rotated through four stations. Each station had habitat focused presentations from SCDNR staff, district commissioners and employees, Foundation members, Clemson Cooperative Extension, and USDA-NRCS. SCDNR staff highlighted features of the property such as the bat box located near the historic house and small game management efforts through dove and quail habitat.



A Record of Commitment

For the second consecutive year, the foundation has proudly achieved its goal of 100% participation from all 46 SC Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This milestone reflects the shared dedication of SC's conservation community. For nearly 50 years, the foundation has been dedicated to protecting the land, water, and living resources that sustain communities—by investing in education, leadership, and charitable support. The foundation believes conservation begins with knowledge, grows through leadership, and is sustained by people who care. Together, the foundation and its supporters are shaping the next generation of stewards for South Carolina.

Support of the foundation helps:

- Provide scholarships and youth leadership opportunities
- Support conservation education statewide
- Fund scientific research on soil, water, and natural resources
- Host workshops, trainings, and field experiences
- Recognize excellence in conservation service

Supported Programs

- SC Envirothon
- SC Woodland Clinic
- SC Commissioner's School for Agriculture
- SC Farmer and Agribusiness Association
- SC Conservation Districts Employee Association
- Environmental Education Association of SC
- SC Soil and Water Stewardship Week Field Day
- College scholarships
- National Wildlife Habitat Education Program

**Give Today.
Inspire Tomorrow.
Protect Forever.**

Your generosity directly supports the people, programs, and partnerships that protect South Carolina's natural resources—today and for generations to come.

Contributions can be mailed to:
SC Conservation Districts
Foundation, P.O. Box 1795
Easley, SC 29641.



South Carolina Watershed Conservation Districts

SE NACD Hall of Fame Inductee



In August 2025, Joe Ghent was inducted into the Southeast Region of the National Association of Conservation Districts Hall of Fame in recognition of nearly five decades of service protecting South Carolina's communities and natural resources. Mr. Ghent's connection to watershed districts began in his childhood, when a watershed dam was constructed on his family's property from 1969-1970. This was an experience that sparked a lifelong commitment to conservation. He began serving on the Cane Creek Watershed Conservation District Board in 1978 and later joined the Lancaster Soil and Water Conservation District Board as a commissioner in 2002, where he continues to serve as Chairman. Ghent brings decades of leadership across both watershed and conservation district work. Today, he also serves as Watershed Liaison for the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts, connecting local districts with state and federal partners. Mr. Ghent is a true Keeper of the Land and a model example of conservation stewardship.



2025 Highlights

John Hayes of the SCDNR-Conservation Districts team, presented on SC Watershed District operations and the newly developed dam inspection system at the National Watershed Coalition Annual Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, highlighting the state's approach to Watershed Dam monitoring and watershed management.

A new dam inspection system was developed and implemented by SCDNR that generates standardized, formal inspection reports using ArcGIS Survey123, improving consistency, efficiency, and record keeping.

During 2025, SCDNR-Conservation Districts inspected 40 high hazard structures and attended 41 Watershed District board meetings, providing ongoing technical support and oversight across the state.

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Federal Farm Bill Programs Summary - Federal FY25

In Federal FY25, the SC USDA-NRCS funded conservation practices statewide through both the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

EQIP is USDA-NRCS's flagship conservation program that helps farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners integrate conservation practices into working lands. This year, \$32,838,615 was contracted on 636 acres in South Carolina to put conservation on the ground through the program.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is another USDA-NRCS program that offers assistance to help producers who are already implementing conservation activities on their land and want to achieve a higher level of environmental stewardship. This year, \$6,368,758 was contracted to landowners returning to the program and \$11,885,065 was contracted to new landowners in the program impacting 246 acres statewide to support conservation activities on the land.



Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP)

The Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP) is a new USDA-NRCS program for Federal FY2026! This program will offer financial and technical assistance through EQIP and CSP to promote whole-farm planning and voluntary development of regenerative agriculture conservation plans that are designed to address natural resource concerns. RPP contracts will be a minimum of 5 years.

Federal FY 2025 Outreach

South Carolina USDA-NRCS staff attended 90 outreach events and gave 47 presentations promoting USDA-NRCS programs in Federal FY2025. Additionally, the Soil Tunnel was used at 13 events.

Federal FY26 Farm Bill Program Allocations

Federal FY2026 EQIP allocations will total \$30 million with 25% being dedicated to RPP (\$7.6 million).

Federal FY2026 CSP allocations will total \$15.9 million with 25% being dedicated to RPP (\$3.9 million).

Federal FY2026 Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) will total \$2 million.



Abbeville

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Abbeville Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) biggest accomplishment was providing services to county residents. The district completed construction of a 20x60x9 foot equipment shed that will house all district rental equipment. This shed will provide protection for district equipment that local farmers utilize which will increase lifespan and aid in maintenance. Abbeville District also presented three H.O. Mullinax scholarships this year at a luncheon that was held at the Clemson Extension Agriculture building. The recipients were: Emily White, Adyson Ashley, and Drew Biggerstaff.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Over 200 seed packets distributed, serving 350 community members
- District agricultural equipment rented out 71 times
- 809 acres planted through district's no-till drill rentals
- 214 tons of lime spread

Other Notable Accomplishments

Bonnie Cann, the district's newest commissioner, was featured in a Youtube video by SCDNR titled "SC Conservation Districts Stewarding Habitat." The district also welcomed a new District Coordinator, Terri Timmerman, who joined the team in August 2025.

Abbeville District held a local NACD Photo and Poster Contest and is grateful for all of the participants.



2026 District Plans

- Increase District Affiliate Memberships and student participation in programs
- Sponsor SC Envirothon team
- Continue to grow seed library
- Continue sponsorship of local FFA teams

Aiken

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



One of Aiken Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) biggest achievements for 2025 was reviving the annual banquet. The district had not held one in over 15 years. The banquet was well attended and a great night! Aiken District awarded Dr. Angela Clifford as Educator of the Year, Senator Tom Young, Jr. as Legislator of the year, and Tristan Dubose as Conservationist of the year. The event was held in downtown Aiken at Newberry Hall. There was also a silent auction to help raise funds for the district's scholarship award. It was truly a whole community event.

Other Notable Accomplishments

Another accomplishment was that the district employee was awarded Outstanding District Employee of the Year! The employee also served as President of the SCCDEA. It was an honor to represent South Carolina at the Southeast Conference in Pigeon Forge this past November along with 8 other SC employees!



Conservation by the Numbers

- NACD Poster Contest received 537 entries
- Over 40 participants for Local Work Group meeting
- \$2,500 scholarship awarded to Aiken County high school senior
- 483 acres planted through district's no-till drill rentals

2026 District Plans

- Host and attend various Ag events
- Involve more schools in poster contest
- Provide workshops through partnerships
- Continue seed library and sponsor 1 SC Envirothon team

Allendale

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Allendale Soil and Water Conservation District (district) is in its ninth year of providing seasonal high tunnel assistance throughout South Carolina. The district was awarded a new 3-year agreement from the USDA-NRCS in September 2025 for its Seasonal High Tunnel Assistance Program.

Seasonal high tunnels help farmers and landowners grow vegetables all year long, allowing for three separate harvests while protecting crops from harsh winds, rain, and extreme temperatures. Some crops include peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, salad greens, berries, and eggplants. Pictured below is a high tunnel system installation in St. Matthews, SC.

The Seasonal High Tunnel program reached 40 adults in 2025.



Conservation by the Numbers

- Conservation programs in Allendale District encompassed 25,048 acres in 2025
- Allendale District has 55 active EQIP and CSP contracts with 31 new applications
- Assisted with implementing \$2,738,905 in conservation practices throughout Allendale District

Other Notable Accomplishments

Partnerships and outreach are a high priority for the district. District outreach includes providing a full scholarship for one student to attend the South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture. Continuing to build relationships with USDA-NRCS and Allendale County Clemson Extension Service to put conservation on the ground is an ongoing effort of the district.

Two district commissioners received Longevity Awards in 2025: Mark Connelly for 20 years and Diane Bosler for 30 years of faithful service.

2026 District Plans

- Continue to install seasonal high tunnels throughout South Carolina
- Sponsor outreach programs with Allendale County Clemson Extension Service
- Celebrate America Recycles Day in November

Anderson

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Anderson Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) biggest achievement was hosting their streambank repair workshop! This was made possible through grant funding by the Anderson Water Council in relation to the Kinder Morgan Pipeline Spill. The workshop was free to attend and open to any district employee or commissioner. There were five districts represented from across the state in addition to support from the City of Anderson Utilities Department and STEC Equipment Inc.

The streambank pictured below is located in a residential area and receives stormwater runoff from the community. Over several years, the streambank had become incised. Through this workshop the district was able to repair the stream, which has many environmental benefits in itself. Furthermore, the district was also able to share the process of applying for grant funding geared towards streambank repair workshops so that other districts can apply a similar approach in their own counties.



Conservation by the Numbers

- 12,021 acres of land enhanced through conservation programs with \$7,422,778 for conservation practices
- Impacted 4,777 people through 71 programs and over 17,500 seed packets checked out from the Seed Library
- Over 80,000 views through over 600 social media posts and monthly E-newsletters

Other Notable Accomplishments



The district is excited to begin their journey as a Green Steps Mentor in Anderson County! Three schools are already working on projects, including stream monitoring, recycling, and composting. Pictured above is the SC Arbor Day tree planting at Riverside Middle School, where 80 middle school agricultural students helped plant three native trees and learned about the benefits of these species.

2026 District Plans

- Grow program partnerships in the county and summer youth programming
- Increase connections with public schools and home school co-ops
- Grow District Affiliate Membership Program to help support district programs

Bamberg

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Bamberg Soil and Water Conservation District (district) recognizes a farmer or landowner each year for outstanding conservation practices. The 2025 Conservation Farmer of the Year award was presented to Aden Diem and his son, Bruce, of Riverby Farms at the district's annual awards banquet in March. Riverby Farms is a family-owned dairy and row crop operation that uses conservation practices such as wastewater management, strip-till planting, erosion control, nutrient and pest management, and low-pressure irrigation to conserve soil, water, and energy.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Bamberg District has 35 active EQIP and CSP contracts
- Assisted with implementing \$3.1 million in conservation practices throughout Bamberg County
- Conservation programs in Bamberg District encompassed 35,076 acres

Other Notable Accomplishments

The district is excited to welcome Amber Ballance as its new District Administrator. Ms. Ballance brings a wealth of experience in outreach and education that will expand and strengthen the district's outreach and education programs in schools and public events. The commissioners are enthusiastic about the positive impact her leadership will have on district operations and community engagement.



2026 District Plans

- Increase District Affiliate Memberships
- Improve Social Media presence
- Develop outreach and educational programs by awarding scholarships and visiting local schools to promote conservation

Barnwell

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Barnwell Soil and Water Conservation District (district) expanded its outreach efforts by participating in the Annual South Carolina Ag + Art Tour Touch-A-Tractor event at the Barnwell County Farmers Market. Community members had the chance to try the Ag Simulator and “harvest” their own crops, explore the workings of tractors and implements, and visit with district commissioners. Commissioners distributed seed packets and shared valuable information about the role of the Barnwell District and how they support and assist local landowners and partners.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 46 District Affiliate Members
- Barnwell District has 161 active EQIP and CSP contracts with 54 new applications in 2025
- Assisted with implementing \$14,768,915 in conservation practices, encompassing 47,906 acres

Other Notable Accomplishments

The district participated in the Lower State Soil Judging Career Development Event (CDE) held at Clemson Edisto Research and Education Center in Blackville, South Carolina. This event helped students gain an understanding of how assessing soil conditions, texture, depth, slope, and erosion are used to make sustainable agronomic and conservation decisions.



2026 District Plans

- Increase District Affiliate Memberships
- Host Local Work Group Meeting
- Continue to expand outreach and education programs through community activities

Beaufort

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Beaufort Soil and Water Conservation District (district) has expanded its landowner outreach program by partnering with work groups, committees, and organizations that uphold high conservation standards. Field Agent Walter Mack represents the district in these partnerships. Program partnerships include: The Nature Conservancy's Living Shorelines Program which helps landowners make their properties more resilient to future erosion; GrowFood Carolina program that works with The Nature Conservancy and Clemson Extension to develop citrus production in the Lowcountry to offset Florida's production decline; and Beaufort County Council to gather information on the use of shipping containers in conservation to work towards creating county ordinances regarding use.

Mr. Mack is also reaching rural landowners about conservation assistance programs and providing training in wholesale packaging.



Conservation by the Numbers

- 3 new landowners assisted with EQIP and CSP contracts; totaling \$39,980; 59 acres
- \$55,744 paid out for active EQIP and CSP contracts
- Over 3,827 people reached through 81 classroom visits, 14 festivals, 8 Kids-in-Kayaks events, and Eco Camp

Other Notable Accomplishments



The district selected John "Jacky" Frazier as The Minority Landowner Magazine's Farmer of the Year. Jacky grew up in a family that farmed more than 100 acres of fruits and vegetables and managed over 100 acres of forestland. Today, he successfully operates Barefoot Farms on St. Helena Island. Jacky is known for sharing his wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience with others.

2026 District Plans

- Increase environmental education programs
- Expand outreach programs by providing conservation assistance to partners
- Promote District Affiliate Membership Program

Berkeley

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Berkeley Soil and Water Conservation District (district) has continued to grow its Berkeley Outdoor Life program. The website reaches an average of 17,600 people per month and produces 1,830 text, phone, and email interactions. Berkeley Outdoor Life was also featured as the headliner article in the South Carolina Association of Counties' County Focus magazine. The district created an informational rack card for distribution at State and Berkeley County Welcome Centers. Berkeley Outdoor Life now offers: 31 Blueways with 270 miles of paddling trails; 24 Walkways with 185 miles of hiking trails; 21 Bikeways with 330 miles of cycling routes. Website progress can be followed at www.BerkeleyOutdoorLife.com.



Other Notable Accomplishments

The district's By Gone Berkeley program published the 4th and 5th volumes of Berkeley Historical Stories totaling over 120 original historical stories. "Top 10 Historical Things to Know" publication was distributed to schools, libraries and county administrative buildings.

In addition, downloadable editions of: "A Selected History of Hezekiah Maham" and "A Southern Campaign Timeline for Francis Marion: The American Revolution 1774-1783" was created.

Conservation by the Numbers

- New conservation plans placed on 1,887 acres
- Earth Team and Berkeley Bees supported community events and festivals impacting over 7,000 visitors
- Berkeley District has 9 producers enrolled in EQIP and CSP totaling \$387,587 in conservation practices

2026 District Plans

- Distribute pollinator packets
- Partner with the Berkeley Schools to promote outreach programs such as: Kids Who Care 2026 and Naturescope
- Continue partnerships with the community to promote historical landmarks in Berkeley County

Calhoun

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Calhoun Soil and Water Conservation District (district) continued to expand conservation programming for county residents of all ages. In partnership with SCDNR-Conservation Education Program and SC Wildlife Federation, the district hosted outreach events at Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve and Interlaken Wildlife Center. The support of many local volunteers helped make these new education efforts a success. Calhoun District also launched a guest speaker series for students at K-8 schools. Professionals from various conservation fields shared how they entered their careers and presented engaging lessons on bats, invertebrates, birds of prey and more. As a mentor to schools working toward Green Steps certification, the district assisted with school gardens, habitat creation, litter pickup, composting, and share tables. The district also expanded their adult outreach to Calhoun Council on Aging and The Gressette Center.



Conservation by the Numbers

- 3,084 youth and 96 adults participated in conservation education programs
- Over 100 District Affiliate Members attended the 55th Annual Banquet
- More than 1,865 guests enjoyed the County's Ag + Art tour on May 17, 2025

Other Notable Accomplishments



The Calhoun County Public School District Board presented the District Coordinator with a Certificate of Appreciation. The district played a lead role in Calhoun County's first Ag + Art Tour in 2025.

Pictured above Commissioners Ronnie Bozard, Josh Johnson, Fred Gantt, and Joel Grubb; Associate Commissioner, Ansley Turnblad, and Coordinator, Mary Dixon (not pictured, Brad Stowe).

2026 District Plans

- Support schools to receive Green Steps certification
- Assist with the 2nd Calhoun Ag + Art tour, May 16, 2026
- Distribute pollinator seeds to citizens, businesses and government offices

Charleston

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Charleston Soil and Water Conservation District (district) hosted its first All-Ages Photography Contest, which ran for one month and was open to amateur photographers of all ages. The contest received more than 71 entries, with winners ranging in age from 6 years old to over 60.

A total of 12 winners were selected and divided into three age groups. Each winner received a cash prize, and their winning photograph was featured in the 2026 district calendar.

The calendars helped showcase local talent while promoting conservation awareness throughout the community. They were distributed to District Affiliate Members, local schools, and conservation partners.

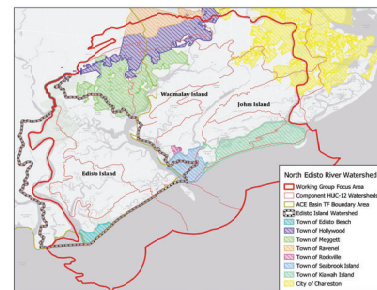
The district plans to continue to host the All-Ages Photography Contest each year.



Conservation by the Numbers

- Awarded over \$1,000 to 12 winners of district photo contest
- Charleston District has 9 active EQIP and CSP contracts
- Assisted with implementing \$226,078 in conservation practices on 2,045 acres

Other Notable Accomplishments



The district continues to partner with the Edisto Island Open Land Trust and Kiawah Conservancy to create a Watershed Plan for the North Edisto and Kiawah Rivers. This task force consists of over 20 members of the conservation community and is committed to creating a watershed plan that protects the environment and prepares the community for sea-level rise.

2026 District Plans

- Promote outreach programs to include the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition, photo contest, and scholarship nominees
- Grow District Affiliate Membership Program
- Continue collaboration with the Edisto Island Open Land Trust and the Kiawah Conservancy

Cherokee

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Cherokee Soil and Water Conservation District (district) relaunched its Land Management Program with the purchase of a new Great Plains 706-NT No-Till Drill. The district held a workshop to educate community members on the benefits of conservation tillage and proper use of equipment. To expand on the educational component of the program, users complete a brief training and successfully pass a knowledge check prior to first use. In addition, Cherokee District refurbished the Land Pride All-Purpose Seeder, making available two pieces of low-cost rental equipment beginning with the 2025 Fall planting season.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 148 adults and 4,560 students reached through conservation education and outreach programs
- 310 acres were impacted through the prescribed fire cooperative and utilizing the district's no-till drills
- Thicketty Creek WSD provided maintenance and repairs for its 5 watershed dams totaling \$8,811

Other Notable Accomplishments

Cherokee District provided educational programs to after school programs, summer school programs, Down on The Farm Day for 2nd graders, and Peach Day for 4th graders. Students learned about healthy soil, watersheds, recycling, habitats, and farming. In partnership with SCFC, the district hosted a prescribed fire workshop to establish the Broad River Prescribed Fire Cooperative.



2026 District Plans

- Establish a land use committee to influence county ordinances
- Launch a mobile seed library for outreach and education at community events
- Support FFA and agricultural education at the secondary school level

Chester

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Chester Soil and Water Conservation District (district) continued to increase education and outreach efforts within the county. The district worked to build relationships with educators, launch a seed library, and promote the annual photo and poster contest. In 2025, the district successfully launched a seed library at all three branches of the Chester County Library system. The seed library quickly became very popular with over 670 seed packs distributed to Chester County citizens. Through the seed library citizens learn the importance of fresh produce and how to care for the land. With support from donations and a grant, the district will expand the seed library in 2026. Chester District held its annual photo and poster contest within the district. Winners were entered into the state-level contest. Olivia Stone won the state photo contest and Camden Brown won the state poster contest for their division. Each winner won a monetary prize. Chester District looks forward to more winners this year using the theme "Soil. Where it all Begins."



Other Notable Accomplishments



Vice Chairman, Jeff Wilson was honored with the 2025 Sunbelt South Carolina Farmer of the Year award. The award honors outstanding farmers from 10 southeastern states by recognizing their innovation, leadership, and impact on agriculture. Jeff owns and operates Cotton Hills Farm in Lowrys along with his two sons. Chester District is very proud of his accomplishments!

Conservation by the Numbers

- 100 fruit trees given away for SC Arbor Day
- 380 acres planted utilizing the district's two no-till drills
- Approximately 60 people attended Affiliate Banquet
- Over 180 students reached through education contests and book sharing

2026 District Plans

- Expand the seed library
- Increase educational programming through after-school workshops and contests
- Increase District Affiliate Memberships
- Promote no-till planting conservation practice

Chesterfield

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District (district) had a very busy year in conservation! The district was awarded a roughly \$600,000 grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to help landowners establish or improve Longleaf Pine habitats on their property. With this grant, the district was able to assist 30 landowners with several Longleaf Pine habitat projects. These projects included plantings, timber stand improvements, controlled burns, Red-Cockaded Woodpecker nesting boxes, etc. Chesterfield District is excited to continue working with the landowners of Chesterfield County.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Assisted with several controlled burns totaling roughly 494 acres
- 302 acres of Timber Stand Improvement
- 33 acres of Longleaf pines planted

Other Notable Accomplishments

Chesterfield District hired a new employee, Mrs. Angie Archambault, in May 2025. Mrs. Angie has been a valuable asset to the district. As the district moved into their new USDA office, Mrs. Angie helped to make this a smooth transition. The district helped to host Chesterfield's new USDA office open house and ribbon cutting ceremony in July 2025.



2026 District Plans

- Continue to offer district burn trailer to landowners
- Sponsor SC Envirothon team
- Offer a landowner education outreach event
- Apply for NFWF grant

Clarendon

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Clarendon Soil and Water Conservation District (district) had a really good year! The district's biggest achievement this year was all three public high schools and one private school in Clarendon County participated in the Annual Poster Contest with over 200 students participants! This year's topic was "Home is Where the Habitat is." Each year the winning posters are displayed at the Striped Bass Festival, which is a local festival in Clarendon County. Each student winner receives a cash prize. The first place winners from each division went on to the state level poster contest, with two students winning the state level contest!

Conservation by the Numbers

- 23 producers used the district's no-till grain drill for a total of 620 acres planted in Clarendon District
- 325 students reached through outreach programs
- 12 new District Affiliate Members

Other Notable Accomplishments

Clarendon District awarded three teachers a Conservation Education Mini-Grant. A K4 teacher from Walker Gamble Elementary School used her mini-grant to adopt a sea turtle through an online program. The class was able to do virtual check-ups on the turtle, named Dixon. They were able to learn more about sea turtles, including their life cycle and how to care for the earth to keep them healthy.



2026 District Plans

- Grow and develop new programs for local schools
- Create new partnerships to provide the citizens of Clarendon County with soil and water education opportunities

Colleton

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Colleton Soil and Water Conservation District (district) named Calvin K. Bailey the 2025 Conservationist of the Year. A native of Union, South Carolina, Mr. Bailey graduated from Clemson University and has dedicated nearly 40 years to the field of forestry. Mr. Bailey served in a variety of roles with the South Carolina Forestry Commission, demonstrating a strong commitment to forest conservation. He has provided leadership and expertise in forestry management throughout the Coastal Region since 2009. Continuing his lifelong dedication to conservation, Mr. Bailey now serves as an Associate Commissioner for the district.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Over 880 children and adults reached through conservation programs
- Conservation programs in Colleton District total 16,090 acres with 700 newly enrolled acres
- Colleton District has 30 active CSP contracts and 37 active EQIP contracts

Other Notable Accomplishments

The district continued its outreach efforts by sponsoring the Colleton County Ag + Art Tour. The South Carolina Artisans Center in partnership with Clemson Cooperative Extension hosted the tour. The Ag + Art Tour is a free, self-guided tour of farms and markets throughout Colleton County. Visitors can see first-hand where their food comes from and learn more about rural life.



2026 District Plans

- Increase student participation in district's poster and essay contest
- Increase District Affiliate Memberships
- Promote district scholarship program

Darlington

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Darlington Soil Water Conservation District (district) teamed up with the Antioch Young Farmers to present the David Allen Scholarship for the very first time this year. The scholarship honors students who are passionate about agriculture and protecting the environment. The award amount is \$1,000 to help students continue their education. This year, Jackson Moore stood out for his dedication and achievements. Jackson is pursuing a degree in Agricultural Business at Clemson University, while continuing his baseball career. His hard work and passion made him the perfect fit for this scholarship, which celebrates students striving to make a positive impact on the land and their community.



Other Notable Accomplishments

On April 18, 2025, District Manager, Dani Chaplin, joined students at Mayo High School for Earth Day activities. She talked about how sunflowers help the soil, support pollinators like bees, and promote biodiversity. To give students a hands-on experience, she prepared 300 sunflower seed packs, which were provided by the Darlington District. These seeds were shared with students at Mayo High School and others across the county, including attendees at the district's annual meeting, to support community involvement in local conservation efforts.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 125 students learned about soil health, pollinators, and biodiversity
- 13 EQIP contracts funded, resulting in \$893,816 across 2,524 acres
- 7 CSP contracts funded, resulting in \$677,262 across 1,226 acres

2026 District Plans

- Hold additional workshops for landowners
- Continue to promote conservation education and outreach
- Host a cover crop field day

Dillon

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

The biggest achievement in 2025 of Dillon Soil and Water Conservation District (district) was the district's outreach efforts in telling the story of conservation. Commissioner Sonny Price was a key speaker at a farmer led event on Using Warm Season Cover Crops to Boost Soil Health and Profitability. It was a great turnout and excellent information was given to around 30 producers in Dillon County. Commissioner Keith Allen traveled to San Antonio, TX and Washington, D.C., to advocate for the importance of locally led conservation programs and the need for more funding for farmers and landowners. The district sponsored the SC Commissioners School of Agriculture and Camp Wildlife Action. The Dillon District believes in educating the next generation of landowners and conservationists.



Conservation by the Numbers

- Assisted with implementation of more than \$3.6 million for conservation practices on 19,817.6 acres
- Assisted with 59 active EQIP and CSP contracts
- 90 acres planted through district's no-till drill rentals

Other Notable Accomplishments



Cody Simpson, State Executive Director for USDA-FSA, visited Commissioner Sonny Price and his brother, Tony, on a recent farm visit. Their farm spans several generations and produces corn, cotton, soybeans, and wheat. They are recognized for their commitment to innovative and sustainable agricultural practices, including no-till farming and the use of cover crops to enhance soil health.

2026 District Plans

- Continue to work on contribution agreement with USDA-NRCS to assist with program delivery
- Increase education and outreach efforts
- Build District Affiliate Membership Program
- Sponsor local 4-H & FFA projects

Dorchester

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Dorchester Soil and Water Conservation District (district) was honored to sponsor the returning high school team, "Catalyst Crew", from Dorchester Academy for the 2025 SC Envirothon Competition. This marked the team's second year competing in the SC Envirothon Competition. The district is incredibly proud of the "Catalyst Crew" and the hard work and dedication they demonstrated in preparing for the competition and representing Dorchester County. With a total of 22 teams from across the state participating, their commitment and enthusiasm truly stood out.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Distributed 3,031 seed packets, reaching 2,012 people
- Received 102 poster and photo contest entries
- College scholarships awarded to 3 students
- Sponsored 1 SC Envirothon team

Other Notable Accomplishments

The district's Pop-Up Seed Sanctuary was launched in the fall of 2022 and can be found at various locations throughout Dorchester County. It aims to promote conservation, agriculture, outdoor activity, and healthy eating habits within the community. To date, the district has distributed an estimated 8,000 packets of garden seeds along with hundreds of conservation themed coloring books.



2026 District Plans

- Attain 5 new District Affiliate Members
- Host Conservation Day Event and workshop
- Participate in 2026 NACD Photo Contest

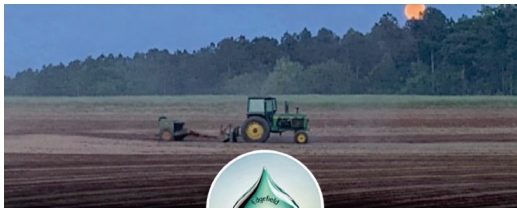
Edgefield

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Edgefield Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) most significant achievement in 2025 was enhancing outreach and service within the county by hiring a new district employee to provide in-office support. This change restored consistent face-to-face interaction with the public and strengthened collaboration with USDA-NRCS. The district's new employee, Rhonda Thomas (pictured below right), lives in Johnston with her son Brandon and is the owner of Thomas Family Farms, LLC.

While there was a transition period, the district had a successful District Affiliate Membership Drive and engaged more than 150 students through donations to various programs. Additionally, a social media presence has been established and is in the process of getting up and running. With this, the district will be able to further reach and educate all ages about conservation and how to better protect this precious land.



Edgefield Soil and Water Conservation District

follow us on Facebook



Other Notable Accomplishments



This year, Edgefield District is proud to welcome Joseph Lee Holmes, Jr. as their newest district commissioner. Lee is a native of Edgefield County. His primary objective is to "continue the soil and water conservation effort by identifying needs, ensuring funding, and educating the public on conservation needs." Lee is pictured above with his wife, Elizabeth and daughters Eliza, Emerson, and Hollis.

Conservation by the Numbers

- District Affiliate Membership Drive produced 40 affiliate members
- WRP Easement protecting roughly 65 acres
- Assisted with implementation of more than \$2 million for conservation practices on 14,159 acres in Edgefield District through multiple contracts

2026 District Plans

- Engage with the SC Farm Bureau Ag Learning Lab to visit schools in Edgefield County
- Increase education and outreach programs for youth and adults
- Promote SC Envirothon in local high schools

Fairfield

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



In 2025, Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District (district) began a new adventure teaching younger students about Smokey the Bear. This addition to educational efforts turned out to be a huge success.

Smokey the Bear teaches students the importance of wildfire prevention. Materials were ordered and given to the students to help them remember about wildfire prevention as well as to remind them to tell others about fire safety.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Assisted with the implementation of more than \$268,263 for conservation practices on over 540 acres
- 178 acres planted by landowners using the district's no-till drill
- 200 students impacted through various programs, contests, and scholarships

Other Notable Accomplishments

Fairfield District continued to support conservation education by sponsoring the seed library, hosting an annual photo contest, and providing scholarship opportunities. To celebrate Arbor Day, the district partnered with a local school to plant trees.

The district became a Certified SC Conservation District by completing the online training provided by SCDNR.



2026 District Plans

- Continue to support conservation education programs such as contests and scholarships
- Work with local government to promote conservation throughout the county
- Host a Local Work Group meeting

Florence

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Florence Soil and Water Conservation District (district) held the district's annual Local Work Group Meeting in February 2025 which was attended by approximately 30 stakeholders from across the county. The breakfast was provided by ArborOne in Florence. ArborOne also provided the meeting space. Several concerns such as soil and water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, and much more were discussed. Also, programs that may benefit land users and lands of Florence County were discussed.

The district was also committed to conservation education, outreach, and research efforts through support of the Environmental Discovery Center at Lynches River County Park. This park provides conservation education, outdoor experiences, and programs to all ages even beyond Florence County borders. The Florence District continues to support the message of the need for the conservation of natural resources locally, statewide, and nationally.



Conservation by the Numbers

- Assisted with implementation of EQIP contracts on 59 acres obligating \$54,556
- Assisted with implementation of CSP contracts on 6,130 acres obligating \$447,975
- 63 miles of watershed canals and ditches used for agricultural drainage relief maintained

Other Notable Accomplishments



Florence District provides support to two South Carolina Watershed Districts: Salem Community and Lynches Lake-Camp Branch. Mr. Dale Rauch, chairman of the Salem Community Watershed District, received the 2025 SCACD Watershed Director of the Year award. Mr. Dale faithfully helps maintain the over 42 miles of canals within the watershed district.

2026 District Plans

- Provide mini-grants to schools and organizations that provide conservation education programs
- Host Local Work Group meeting in February to discuss resource concerns and conservation practices that benefit landowners

Georgetown

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

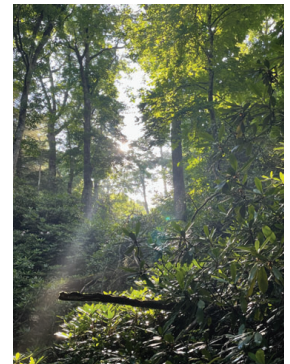
Biggest Achievement of 2025



Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District (district) awards scholarships to deserving students pursuing degrees in conservation or natural resources. In 2025, five outstanding students received \$500 scholarships from the district. Students were chosen for their academic achievement, community service, and commitment to protecting SC's natural resources. Professor Deanna Ruth said "This recognition reflects both the students' hard work and the value of community partnership. They are developing the knowledge and skills needed to protect our forests, wildlife, and coastal ecosystems for generations to come."

Other Notable Accomplishments

Georgetown District annually holds a photography contest. Some outstanding photos were received of nature, wildlife, and landscapes in the county. Each year the contest is held to encourage students to get outdoors and see the natural beauty of the county. It is the best way for students to learn and develop a love and appreciation of natural resources.



Conservation by the Numbers

- 13,386 acres enrolled in conservation programs
- Awarded 5 scholarships to college students
- Reached 955 students through educational programs
- Provided administrative assistance to farmers and landowners for 7 new EQIP and 16 new CSP contracts

2026 District Plans

- Assist and support local FFA Chapters
- Expand involvement in school contests
- Sponsor students to attend 4-H Camp
- Strengthen relationship with schools

Greenville

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Greenville Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) biggest achievement was participating in the iMAGINE STEAM Festival in downtown Greenville in partnership with the Greenville Water Collective. Reaching 24,000 people, district staff educated youth and families about stormwater runoff and the movement of stormwater in a watershed. The 3D watershed model table visually and tactilely demonstrated how litter and pollutants travel across the landscape when it rains. Youth were excited to see water trickle over familiar places and people discovered their watersheds and cities on the map, making learning personal.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 15,850 seed packets distributed
- 965,107 people reached by conservation programs
- 629 students learned about stormwater, pollutants, and soil health
- Online outreach efforts seen by 1,071,159 viewers

Other Notable Accomplishments

The district expanded outreach to PreK-12 youth with a variety of new programs, including an interactive monarch butterfly migration and conservation program in which ambassador butterflies were mailed to a school in Mexico. Greenville District also offered multiple soil health workshops for landowners. Furthermore, the district piloted newly designed storm drain marker (pictured below).



2026 District Plans

- Expand successful outreach and educational programming by beginning a Conservation Certificate pilot program to offer Greenville County residents the chance to become a Greenville County Conservation Ambassador
- Evaluate and renovate access roads to nine flood-control dams in the county

Greenwood

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Hurricane Helene devastated Greenwood County landowners. Among the damage, the amount of fallen timber was extensive. The local sawmills became overrun and had lead times ranging from 6 months to a year before they could take in any more trees. Seeing this, Greenwood Soil and Water Conservation District (district) decided to purchase a TimberKing 2020 portable sawmill that could greatly benefit local landowners. The sawmill allowed the district to help people salvage their fallen trees. After training, the district commissioners have been able to begin utilizing the sawmill to help with Hurricane Helene clean-up. District commissioners have also been able to teach other landowners how to operate it safely.

The sawmill also created a great opportunity to educate local youth and provide them hands-on experience to gain a new skill set. Greenwood District has provided demonstrations for students.



Other Notable Accomplishments



Greenwood District hosted several events throughout the year, including the Woodlands Clinic for local FFA chapters at Maxwell Farms. The district hosted the West Piedmont Area Meeting in August to discuss stormwater issues and regulations. The district also hosted a Soils Judging Competition for local FFA chapters at Piedmont Technical College (PTC) along with the PTC Agriculture Department.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 250 feral hogs trapped by district hog trapping program for a total of roughly 4,500 hogs since start of program
- 437 acres planted through district no-till drill rentals
- 100 hours logged on mini excavator implementing EQIP practices and clearing Hurricane Helene debris with 37,000 board feet milled using sawmill

2026 District Plans

- Start the process to build an education outreach center to help engage local students and landowners
- Host field days
- Organize more educational events

Hampton

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Hampton Soil and Water Conservation District (district) assisted in planning the inaugural Hampton County Ag + Art Tour. Hampton County had two stops on the tour; the Hampton County Airport and SCDNR Webb Wildlife Center. The airport was lively with planes arriving and taking off, while vendors sold fresh baked goods, handcrafted jewelry, painted farm tools, and ceramics. There was also an antique tractor exhibit, a petting zoo, and numerous interactive activities for children. Several small aircrafts were on display, allowing participants to look inside and take a seat. The SCDNR Webb Wildlife Center served as an outdoor classroom for nature enthusiasts eager to observe wildlife or simply enjoy a walk in nature. The event also featured local vendors, including a local author selling her book and a photographer offering nature-inspired prints. The Ag + Art committee members and district commissioners were thrilled by the strong turnout at both tour locations and are excited about the opportunity to support an even bigger Ag + Art Tour in 2026.



Conservation by the Numbers

- Assisted with implementing \$1.4 million in conservation practices throughout Hampton District
- Hampton District has 53 active EQIP and CSP contracts with 94 new applications in 2025
- Reached over 3,400 students and citizens through outreach programs

Other Notable Accomplishments



The Hampton and Allendale districts organized the Edisto–Savannah Valley Area meeting at the Webb Wildlife Center. During the meeting, reports were shared by conservation partners, highlighting ongoing collaboration and conservation efforts. A presentation was given on the wide range of projects being implemented at the center, followed by a guided tour of the dove fields, pine forests, and brood habitat.

2026 District Plans

- Continue taking part in various outreach programs such as: Ag Learning Lab, Read Across America Day, and America Recycles Day
- Grow District Affiliate Membership Program
- Sponsor SC Envirothon team and volunteer at the competition

Horry

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Horry Soil and Water Conservation District (district) continued to provide education and outreach to the county. The Annual Essay Contest in all Horry County Schools for 5th and 7th grade students was a major success. This event reached over 5,500 students, educating them about conservation and stormwater. The top three winners and their teachers from each participating school were rewarded thanks to the support of Horry County Stormwater and the Horry County School District. The James Blanton Amphitheater at Playcard Environmental Educational Center was dedicated. The center was started in 1987 with a partnership of Horry County Foundation, Horry District, and Horry County Schools to allow students to be "Forever Wild" and enjoy outdoor learning. The James Blanton amphitheater serves as a new, handicap-accessible outdoor classroom fulfilling a vision James Blanton had over 40 years prior for children to connect with the outdoors.



Other Notable Accomplishments



For the fourth year, Horry District has sponsored the Horry County Agricultural Leadership Forum hosted at Southern Palmetto Farms. Over 220 students attended, from all seven Horry County FFA Chapters, to interact with representatives from various colleges and agricultural careers. This event has been a great success in sharing Ag with the next generation!

Conservation by the Numbers

- 206 applications in EQIP for 2025 with 7 new EQIP contracts for a total of \$248,297 impacting 161 acres
- 78 applications in CSP for 2025 with 7 new EQIP contracts for a total of \$130,420 impacting 139 acres
- Completed 78 installations of sewer tie ons and septic tank and field lines

2026 District Plans

- Secure NACD grant for technical assistance
- Complete the 2025 319 grant with SCDES
- Support two teams for SC Envirothon
- Secure a Wildlife Federation Grant

Jasper

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Jasper Soil and Water Conservation District (district) partnered with Royal Live Oaks Academy for the Arts & Sciences to establish a school garden that supports the growth and consumption of clean, healthy food for students. Through this initiative, students received instruction on nutrition, healthy food choices, and portion control, along with hands-on lessons on how food is grown. Students learned to plant, harvest, and prepare a variety of vegetables, reinforcing nutrition concepts through experiential learning. The district provided interactive, hands-on nutrition education that engaged students' senses while encouraging independent exploration and critical thinking. Maintaining the garden extended beyond a traditional nutrition lesson by fostering a meaningful emotional connection to food, an essential component of lasting behavior change. Students proudly planted, harvested, prepared, and enjoyed the fruits of their labor, strengthening their connection to both the garden and healthy eating habits.



Other Notable Accomplishments



The district partnered with Keep Jasper County Beautiful to launch an Adopt a Campus litter pickup campaign across Jasper County Schools. In just five months, seven participating schools removed more than two tons of litter. This program promotes student leadership, campus pride, recycling practices, environmental stewardship, and responsible waste disposal.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Assisted with the implementation of \$237,235 in conservation practices in Jasper District
- Jasper District has 17 active EQIP and CSP contracts
- District outreach presentations reached 4,500 students and citizens

2026 District Plans

- Continue to engage local students for Adopt A Campus program
- Increase outreach and education for district landowners, conservation partners, and students
- Protect natural resources by utilizing regulations on urban development

Kershaw

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Kershaw Soil and Water Conservation District (district) strives to provide outreach to all ages in Kershaw County. The annual conservation camp offered students the opportunity to learn about a variety of conservation topics through hands-on activities. Pictured above are the winners of the archery competition at camp. Other programs included the implementation of education mini-grants to local schools, college scholarships to rising freshmen, and classroom presentations on habitats during Stewardship Week. Kershaw District hosted the East Piedmont Area Meeting where districts networked and joined Naturalist Josh Arrants on a nature walk.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 570 people were reached by district networking at local farmer's market
- 15 families reached through Conservation Day Camp
- \$3,000 awarded in mini-grant and scholarship funds
- 500 students impacted through local contests

Other Notable Accomplishments

Kershaw District provided an outreach table during the Holiday Market at the Kershaw County Farmer's Market to celebrate Arbor Day. Children were invited to decorate "tree cookies" and discover facts about that tree through its rings. The district used this as an affiliate member drive, while talking to families about their mission and providing them with an affiliate packet.



2026 District Plans

- Grow school engagement through Green Steps Schools and offering lessons on soils
- Host a Longleaf Pine Field Day for landowners
- Increase SC Envirothon participation

Lancaster

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

The Lancaster County Agricultural Society partnered with the Lancaster Soil and Water Conservation District (district) and the Lancaster County Library System to offer a free monthly adult outreach program for residents. The Agricultural Society is made up of the Agriculture Department and Future Farmers of America (FFA) Department from Andrew Jackson High School, Buford High School, Indian Land High School, and Lancaster High School. Through this partnership, the Cool Beans Seed Library has expanded to include hands-on educational programs for adults. Classes have featured topics such as fall gardening, canning, floral design, and charcuterie boards. FFA officers attend each event and deliver a brief presentation about their agricultural programs before the class begins. This initiative has been a tremendous success with over 225 participants, fostering community engagement and promoting agricultural education throughout Lancaster County.



Conservation by the Numbers

- Assisted with implementation of more than \$1.38 million to implement conservation practices on 7,113 acres
- Cool Beans Seed Library provided 19,400 seed packets
- Reached 205,924 people through social media

Other Notable Accomplishments



Lancaster District hosted their Local Work Group and Open House with 40 people in attendance. This event allowed attendees to share their resource concerns with commissioners and state and federal partners.

To increase youth engagement, the district started a youth board. Members of the youth board have elevated outreach efforts through various projects.

2026 District Plans

- Continue to grow the Youth Board and increase education and outreach opportunities
- Recognize outstanding conservation efforts through conservation awards
- Maintain 5 flood control lakes

Laurens

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Laurens Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) program, Team Ecology, has impacted over 7,700 third graders since its beginning 11 years ago. It is held every spring at the Joe Adair Outdoor Education Center. The students cycle through stations while learning about topics such as watersheds, landfills, pollinators, local wildlife, recycling, litter, composting, soil types, and air quality. Also included is a nature walk on one of the trails the Adair Center has to offer. It takes over 40 volunteers, several community groups, cooperation from all the schools, and a partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce to pull off this huge event each year. Team Ecology also requires months of planning that the District Coordinator puts in with much help from the Director at the Adair Center and the Coordinator from Keep Laurens County Beautiful.

Some projects truly take the whole village. To become a volunteer this year, please reach out at rgibbs.conservation@gmail.com.



Other Notable Accomplishments



The annual photo contest has been going on since before the digital camera days. This year the district had over 150 entries! Featured above is "On a Wing & a Prayer" by Gregory Rankin.

Laurens District was incredibly proud to sponsor the livestock arena for the new Laurens County Agricultural Center. Two shows have already been hosted and the district looks forward to many more!

Conservation by the Numbers

- Over 2,000 students educated
- Over 1,800 adults reached through local events
- 6,611 acres of land contracted for conservation practices
- 14 Watershed Structures maintained with easements to top of dam elevation

2026 District Plans

- Increase outreach to home school groups
- Support more individual class projects, local FFA Chapters, and Ag Center events
- Grow annual Fall Festival, seed library, and District Affiliate Membership Program

Lee

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Lee Soil and Water Conservation District (district) hired a new district secretary, Chandler Baker, in April of 2025. She was one of the first district employees in the state to fully complete the SCDNR-Conservation Districts Training Certification program! Chandler is excited to help the district with continued conservation education and outreach programs. This year the district helped to support the County Prescribed Burn Association and the Farm Bureau's Grain Rescue Program for Lee County landowners. Also, the district supported the South Carolina Conservation Districts Foundation and their efforts of conservation outreach and advocacy.

Lee District will continue to strive for and improve conservation efforts in Lee County!



Other Notable Accomplishments



In 2025, Commissioner Steven Welsh's 25th anniversary for serving Lee District was recognized! The district is grateful for everything Commissioner Welsh has done for the district and the community! The district looks forward to adding and implementing additional conservation practices to better serve the community and Lee County.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Provided administrative support to farmers and landowners for over 250 EQIP and CSP contracts and applications
- 350+ residents reached through outreach opportunities
- Over 4,000 acres assisted in conservation

2026 District Plans

- Participate in Camp 4-H2O hosted by the Clemson Extension Service
- Promote further outreach and education
- District to become a SC Certified Conservation District by all commissioners completing the free online training

Lexington

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District (district) has refined its partnership and outreach efforts by participating in more collaborative events. In partnership with Lexington County library system, the district offered two new programs. Conservation & Creation highlights the importance of reducing waste and challenging participants to creatively repurpose items. Who's in My Backyard explores the mammals, birds, fish and insects found in SC backyards and why it's important to protect their habitats. The Backyard Benefits Team is a partnership between the district, Lexington County Solid Waste Management, and Lexington Countywide Stormwater Consortium. This partnership assists the Lexington County library system with their Drip Drop Rainbows program by leading the rain chain program at 5 of the 10 county libraries. The district has also partnered with Clemson Cooperative Extension to host two of the four workshops in their Farmer Development Workshop series.



Other Notable Accomplishments



Lexington District supported 12 Green Steps Schools across the five Lexington County school districts. Beechwood Middle School won the SC Green Steps Overall School of the Year award for their commitment to a wide array of projects. Their most notable projects include a nature trail, school garden, and an impressive litter clean up effort.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Supported the implementation of more than \$519,000 in conservation practices
- Over 2,500 attendees during the 2025 Lexington Ag + Art Tour
- Over 1,700 youth and adults educated on pollinators, soil composition, erosion, and water conservation

2026 District Plans

- Increase the number of certified Green Steps Schools in Lexington County
- Increase community awareness on the benefits of conservation
- Develop future fundraising and sponsorship events

Marion

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) greatest accomplishments of 2025 were education and outreach efforts. The district's essay contest, the James F. Huggins, Sr. Scholarship, and the Marion District Poster Contest, held each year with 5th - 8th grade students and high school seniors, were a huge success. The topic this year was: "Home is Where the Habitat is." The district commissioners enjoyed reading the essays and judging the posters, as well as the scholarship applications. The district also sponsored school raised garden beds. The garden beds are always a great hit with teachers and students alike. The process of planting the seeds and/or plants and tending to the gardens is very rewarding and an important learning experience. The teachers and students are always so proud of their reaped rewards.



Other Notable Accomplishments



The district's 2025 Conservation Award went to brothers Neal and Clinard Moore from Mullins, SC. Their conservation practices include no-till and strip-till, nutrient management, pest management, conservation crop rotation, and cover crops. These practices help improve the soil quality, water quality, and productivity on their farm and conserve it for farming by future generations.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 963 acres planted with district no-till drills and seeder
- 112 students learned about conservation through district annual Essay and Poster contest and raised garden beds
- \$2,000 James F. Huggins, Sr. Scholarship was awarded to students

2026 District Plans

- Add new programs to schools and partner with other conservation agencies for outreach programs
- Increase District Affiliate Memberships
- Host workshops for local farmers and landowners

Marlboro

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Marlboro Soil and Water Conservation District (district) had a very busy year of community outreach. Associate Commissioner Johnnie Thomas worked with various schools in the community to reach students to build raised garden beds at various schools. The district also supported a community garden where students were able to learn how to grow vegetables and learn about sustainability. The produce grown in the garden was available to members of the community. Several members of the district also helped to support the Marlboro County School District Bus Driver Appreciation event where breakfast was provided and gifts were presented to hard working bus drivers of the community. A 'Kids Night Out' event was sponsored by the district. During this event students had a camp-out and learned about the outdoors. It also allowed students to develop positive relationships with members of the community.



Other Notable Accomplishments



Marlboro District welcomed Associate Commissioner Johnnie Thomas to the district. Johnnie has been a great asset to the district and the community. The district also welcomed Commissioner Malcolm Calhoun to the board. Malcolm was officially sworn in December 2025. Malcolm has been a part of the board for several years and is excited to serve the district.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 500 students and adults reached through community outreach events
- 600 acres of conservation practices applied through conservation programs
- Over \$44 million in conservation practices applied through EQIP and CSP

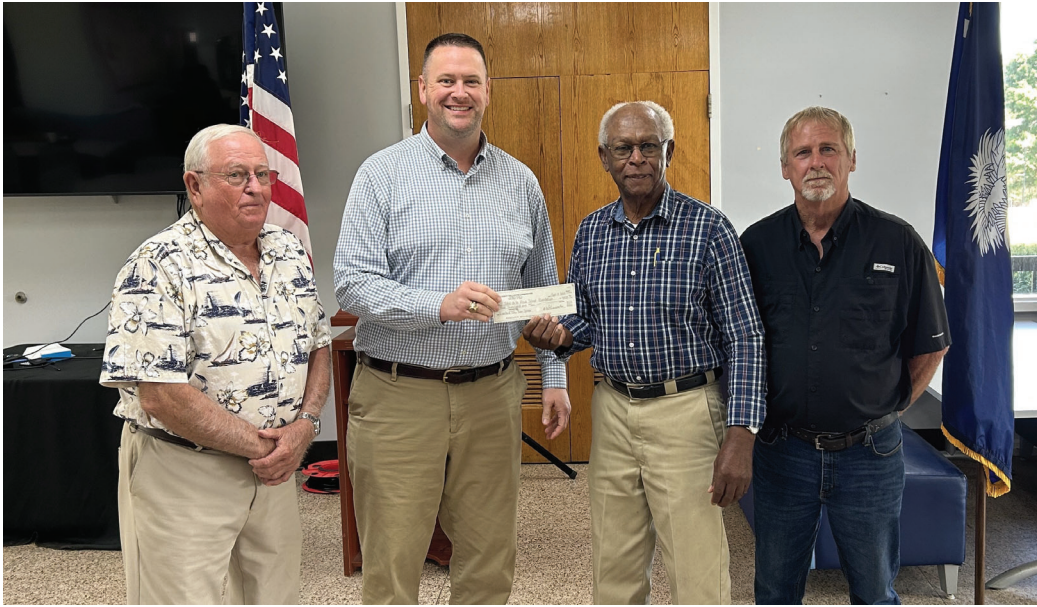
2026 District Plans

- Work with schools in developing raised garden beds
- Offer a Bee Keeping Class to the community
- Promote the rental of district's cover crop seeder

McCormick

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



McCormick Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) biggest achievement of 2025 was awarding a grant to the SC Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe. The grant assisted with providing feed and food during the student competition showing of livestock, fowl, and other animals. McCormick Commissioners Thomas Ware, Edward Deason, and Wesley White presented the grant to President Dr. Timothy Keown (middle left). This is the only residential high school for agriculture in the nation. The district continues to provide Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) Scholarships to future stewards of the land.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 178 youths and adults served through district programs
- Assisted with implementation of \$690,000 for EQIP conservation practices in McCormick District
- Assisted with implementation of \$87,000 for CSP conservation practices in McCormick District

Other Notable Accomplishments

McCormick District also presented an oil rendering of Fort Charlotte made by Commissioner Julie Davis to Dr. Keown with Chairman Bob Edmonds for the America 250 Celebration. Fort Charlotte was a Colonial Era fort on the Savannah River in 1775 where the first overt act of seizure of British property occurred in the American colonies during the war for American Independence.



2026 District Plans

- Award scholarships to and sponsor FFA at the SC Governor's School for Agriculture
- Host a photo contest
- Sponsor SC Envirothon, Farm City Day, and Woodlands Clinic

Newberry

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District (district) received a \$200,000 USDA-NRCS Grant for Pollinators and Gardens. The funds were used to launch a mobile education lab for youth and adult education along with a partnership with Newberry College for a seasonal high tunnel for collegiate education. Since launching in June 2025, Newberry District has utilized the trailer to host classes on Summer, Fall, and Winter Gardens, events at local schools, and multiple workshops. The lab is a 24 foot customized trailer that includes an outdoor classroom setting with video capability. Hands-on demonstrations and visual aids make learning more engaging and effective. Most importantly, it highlights the role of pollinators in the ecosystem, underscoring the need for their conservation.



Conservation by the Numbers

- 3,200 adults and 1,700 youth impacted by district programs; including sponsoring 1 SC Envirothon team
- Assisted with the implementation of more than \$3.4 million on 15,775 acres in Newberry District
- Keep Newberry County Beautiful cleaned 171 miles of roads and removed 19,214 pounds of litter

Other Notable Accomplishments

Newberry Ag + Art Tour was held May 10, 2025. Nine Farm stops across the county provided an educational experience on farm life. There were over 500 visitors at stops including Lever Farms, Hi Brau Beef, Carolina Pride Pastures, Wickers Greenhouse, Carter & Holmes Nursery, West Ridge Farm, Chandler Farms, Peaky Hollow, and Bower's Farm.

The 24th annual Camp Conservation was held June 16-20 with 60 children ages 6-12 in attendance.

Over 250 books were given to students from K-5th grade through reading in classrooms and library storytime events.

2026 District Plans

- Continue to host outreach programs such as Camp Conservation and Newberry Ag + Art Tour 2026
- Host Local Work Group Meeting
- Increase youth engagement through mobile education lab and scholarship program

Oconee

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



In 2025, Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District (district) partnered with Oconee County GIS services to use a drone to monitor and document the current status of the conservation easements held by the district. This will provide digital evidence of the state of each of the easements at a particular date and time, the potential existence of any violations or changes on the properties, and serve as an excellent reference point for the district as they continue the monitoring process. Many thanks to Oconee County and GIS coordinator, Nick Walton, for their efforts and collaboration on this project.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 660 acres planted through district's no-till drill rentals
- 280 students impacted through contests and class visits
- A truckload of trash removed from Chattooga River corridor during SCDNR Annual Beach and River Sweep
- 2,826 acres in conservation easements monitored

Other Notable Accomplishments

Oconee District had many projects this year, including the removal of unauthorized fences from watershed dams, sale of one no-till drill to another conservation district to keep it in the conservation family, and selection and election of a new board member. The district also began digitizing paper easement deeds and plats and continued their educational outreach efforts through the Arts and Essay Contest.



2026 District Plans

- Continue development of digital resources related to easements and watersheds
- Renew focus on social media impact and outreach through Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms
- Improve district's Oak Grove facility

Orangeburg

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Orangeburg Soil and Water Conservation District (district) focused on expanding educational outreach by assisting two schools in becoming certified Green Steps Schools. Brookdale Elementary successfully became the first school in Orangeburg County to achieve Green Steps School Certification.

Felton Lab Charter School is currently working towards its certification and is striving to teach students how to develop sustainable food sources both at school and at home. To support this effort, the district provided six Bartlett and Oriental pear trees to establish a pear orchard. The trees were planted by students in grades 6–8 and will provide flowers for pollinators, shade for the school’s playground, and fresh fruit for students. These trees complement the plants already growing in the school’s enclosed garden area. This open space is the ideal environment for continued agricultural learning and sustainability education.



Other Notable Accomplishments



The district partnered with USDA-NRCS to display their Soil Tunnel at the Orangeburg County Fair. Approximately 2,000 children, teachers, and volunteers were reached during this week long exhibit to learn about conservation, different types of soils, where food comes from, pollinators, and hands-on activities provided by the Foundations of Water Education at Felton Lab.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Conservation programs in Orangeburg District encompassed 8,814 acres
- Orangeburg District has 203 active EQIP and CSP contracts in 2025
- Assisted with implementing \$4,009,822 in conservation practices throughout Orangeburg District

2026 District Plans

- Participate in the Storm Drain Art Project
- Sponsor SC Envirothon team and Edisto FFA
- Support Green Steps Schools Certification
- Volunteer for Farm Bureau Mobile Learning Lab

Pickens

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District's (district) biggest achievement was their growth and development. Vice-Chairman, W. Kirby Player, was awarded Conservation District Commissioner of the Year! Commissioner Player consistently exemplifies the values of integrity, innovation, and service to the public while strengthening relations with county and state elected officials. Pickens District is proud to have sponsored and would like to recognize the students from Gillian Black's Agriculture class at the Pickens County Career and Technology Center for their participation in the 2025 SC Envirothon. They won the SC Envirothon FFA Division and qualified for the National FFA Environmental and Natural Resources competition in Indianapolis, Indiana. The district also hired Sarah Black to the new position of Education Outreach Coordinator to promote conservation education in Pickens County. In addition, a total of \$385 was awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners of the district education contest and to participating teachers.



Other Notable Accomplishments



Pickens District board members were proud to recognize Representative Davey Hiott at their Christmas Breakfast Reception for his dedicated service and support to district initiatives.

The district also hosted a July 4th Gratitude Breakfast Reception welcoming local elected officials, county office personnel, and cooperating partners.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 40 acres planted through district's no-till drill rentals
- 2,500 people used seed library with 12,000 seed packets distributed
- 10 new landowners served to put \$1,038,600 towards conservation practices in Pickens District, which represents an above average success rate of 27%

2026 District Plans

- Continue to participate in the NACD Poster Contest, SCACD meetings, FFA events, local festivals, conferences, and farmers markets
- Sponsor SC Envirothon teams, add District Affiliate Memberships, and assist seed library
- Complete Sensory Garden

Richland

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (district) hosted the 2025 Richland County Ag + Art Tour, which featured 17 farms and agribusinesses. The 2025 tour saw a 16.7% increase in participants from the previous year, with more than 6,185 attendees experiencing the tour. Visitors engaged in local agriculture, learned about rural life, enjoyed the melodies of local musicians, and purchased works and goods from more than 100 artisans.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 483 agricultural professionals attended 13 workshops and events; 7,099 people received monthly e-newsletters
- 2,735 students and 332 educators reached through programs such as the mini-grant program, poster contest, and professional development events
- 16,420+ seed packets distributed; 965+ no-till drill acres

Other Notable Accomplishments

The National Association of Conservation Districts announced Richland County student Aneysha Laureano as the 2024 national poster contest winner for Grades 2-3 Division. The poster theme was "Home is Where the Habitat is." Laureano was recognized by Richland County Council and featured in the SC Wildlife magazine. Her artwork was displayed at EdVenture, a children's museum in Columbia.



2026 District Plans

- Feature up to 20 local farms and agribusinesses on the 2026 Richland County Ag + Art Tour
- Continue to offer free seeds to residents through Seed Sanctuary program
- Celebrate the 2026 stewardship theme, "Soil. Where it all Begins," with the community

Saluda

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Saluda Soil and Water Conservation District (district) played a pivotal role in enabling the Saluda County 4-H Ag Immersion Camp through their donation to the camp. Over the course of three exciting and educational days, 13 youth from Saluda, Newberry, and Lexington Counties participated in the camp. It was a great opportunity for rising 6th-12th graders to learn from hands-on activities about agriculture, livestock, and leadership. The group toured several farms in the area that use innovative farming to learn firsthand what it takes to be successful in the farming industry from local farmers, agricultural professionals, and business owners.

Conservation by the Numbers

- Approximately 1,783 youths and adults served through district programs
- 799 seed packets distributed through seed library
- 107 entries with 12 winners in Annual Photo Contest
- 116 people attended Annual Awards Banquet

Other Notable Accomplishments

Saluda District held its 2nd Annual Photo Contest this year with the theme of "Best Agriculture." District commissioners judged and selected the winning photos to receive cash prizes, a feature in the district calendar and newsletter, and recognition at their Annual Awards Banquet. The district also recognized the Hall Family as the 2025 Conservation Farmer of the Year in Saluda County.



2026 District Plans

- Add a Kids in the Park kiosk at local park
- Increase involvement with local programs
- Assist with SC Envirothon and Woodlands Clinic
- Continue to host Annual Photo Contest and Awards Banquet

Spartanburg

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



As Spartanburg County continues to urbanize, Spartanburg Soil and Water Conservation District (district) is working to build name recognition in the community while maintaining partnerships with the agricultural community by offering a fleet of services and rentals. The district promoted their poster contest at schools and libraries; painted 5 more storm drains; grew the Local Work Group by over 30%; established a seed library; presented at conferences, local universities, community groups, and at Stewardship Week Field Day; participated in Ag in the Classroom; sponsored 4 SC Envirothon teams; and maintained a habitat for monarch butterflies.

Other Notable Accomplishments

In September 2024, Spartanburg County was impacted by Hurricane Helene. Many mature trees were lost, making huge changes to the canopy. Close to home for the district was the Science Trail at partner USC Upstate, where a vast section of trees was demolished. For Arbor Day, the district helped to acquire and plant fifteen 10-15 gallon trees where they will help replenish the canopy.



Conservation by the Numbers

- 5 district commissioners and 1 employee became SC Conservation District Certified
- 549 acres planted through district's no-till drill rentals
- 16 rentals of firminator and new aerator equipment
- Over 9,000 pieces of litter removed with WaterGOAT

2026 District Plans

- Develop new Annual and 5 Year Plan to reflect changing landscape of Spartanburg County
- Continue to grow Local Work Group meeting with changed meeting month
- Partner with EEASC to revitalize the demonstrational garden

Sumter

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Sumter Soil and Water Conservation District (district) excelled in outreach in 2025. Three children were sponsored to attend Camp Bob Cooper. The district had two Conservation District Fellows that contributed to the seed library, community litter pickups, SC Envirothon, and assisted with Conservation Education Mini-Grants. Sumter District awarded four \$1,000 Conservation Education Mini-Grants to Sumter Schools and is currently assisting Alice Drive Middle School in becoming a Green Steps School. Several classes were taught on point and non-point source pollution. The district partnered with SC Wildlife Federation and Clemson Extension in a Water for Wildlife Workshop; partnered with Master Gardeners to offer a Beginning Gardener workshop; and assisted in a Summer Water Conservation Class at Liberty Steam Charter School.



Conservation by the Numbers

- Partnered with Clemson Extension, National Wildlife Federation, and Master Gardeners to teach workshops to approximately 60 citizens
- Currently holds 2,834 acres in Conservation Easements
- 277 acres planted through the district's no-till drill

Other Notable Accomplishments

Sumter District obtained a grant through Palmetto Pride to purchase a WaterGOAT. On June 12th, the WaterGOAT was successfully installed at the Prisma Health Shot Pouch Greenway. This floating trash barrier will catch litter, plastic, and natural debris to improve the waterway and protect wildlife. The Greenway is a 3.4-mile paved multi-use path connecting Dillon Park and Swan Lake-Iris Gardens. The Greenway is well utilized by walkers, joggers, and bike riders. Additional expansions have already begun to expand the Greenway and make it even more accessible to the community.

2026 District Plans

- Sponsor a Sumter SC Envirothon team
- Purchase a second no-till drill for rental
- Expand seed library to second branch location
- Strengthen and continue to build District Affiliate Membership Program

Union

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025



Union Soil and Water Conservation District (district) hosted their annual conservation poster contest. The theme for 2025 was "Home is Where the Habitat is" which promoted the essentials plants and animals need to survive. In 2025, 56 third grade students submitted posters into the district's poster contest from five local schools: Monarch Elementary, Buffalo Elementary, Foster Park Elementary, Jonesville Elementary, and Union Christian Day School. First, second, and third place winners received a cash prize as well as the teacher with the most posters submitted.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 500 acres were planted utilizing the district's two no-till drills
- Assisted with the implementation of more than \$440,511 on 3,104 acres in Union District

Other Notable Accomplishments

Union District was a sponsor for the Union County Farm Show on September 20. Exhibitors from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia came to showcase old and new tractors and other equipment. There were over 2,000 people in attendance.

The district also sponsored a student to attend SC Commissioner's School for Agriculture.



2026 District Plans

- Maintain Watershed District dams
- Host Conservation Poster Contest for 3rd Grade
- Sponsor Union County Farm Show
- Commissioners to attend Annual SC Conservation Partnership Conference

Williamsburg

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District (district) holds a poster contest each year for lower grade classes. The winning class of the contest in 2025 was Mrs. Burks's third grade class at Williamsburg Academy. The class submitted a great poster showcasing the stewardship week topic "Home is Where the Habitat is." The students did an in-depth study about the many habitats in South Carolina from the mountains to the mid-lands to the coast. They also investigated the different inhabitants of each region and their effect on the environment. Mrs. Burks said the group worked diligently on their poster even during recesses and breaks. They found the theme very interesting and eagerly learned important data about the homes of the animals in each area. The class celebrated their victory with a pizza party supplied by the district. The essay contest and other school contests help to educate youth on the importance of conservation and encourages them to get involved.



Conservation by the Numbers

- No-till drill planted 148 acres of conservation tillage
- Partnered with Keep Williamsburg Beautiful to remove 1,600 pounds of trash from the land and river
- 2,310 students reached by educational programs
- 14,940 acres enrolled in conservation programs

Other Notable Accomplishments



Each year the Williamsburg District offers teachers the chance to apply for funds to assist with conservation education in their classroom. The winner of the award in 2025 was Ms. Thomas of Hemingway Middle School. Ms. Thomas chose to take her class to the SC State Museum where they could learn and explore history and science. The 6th grade class of 30 visited the museum in May.

2026 District Plans

- Create a mini grant for schools to visit state parks or conservation sites
- Hire an intern to assist with office business
- Partner with Keep Williamsburg Beautiful
- Send students to conservation camps

York

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2025

In 2023, Associate Commissioner Williams expressed his concern about the upkeep of the Rock Hill Blackjacks Heritage Preserve to the York Soil and Water Conservation District (district) board. Rock Hill Blackjacks Heritage Preserve, located within York County, is home to the Schweinitz Sunflower which has been federally endangered since 1991. The board took Mr. William's concern into consideration, researched the property, and wrote letters to local legislators as well as SCDNR. On September 3rd, 2025, York District board, local legislators, including SC Congressman Randy Ligon and SC Senator Everett Tubbs, and SCDNR staff met to discuss concerns and visit the property. While visiting the property, SCDNR staff provided a plan to resolve the concerns and collaborate with the district. Since then, local legislators have worked to see that management of the property has changed and the district hopes to see the potential of the preserve to be reached.



Other Notable Accomplishments



In July 2025, York District was invited to teach a class to a local summer camp located at Curtin Farms. Staff taught a lesson about pollinators in which students learned which fruits and vegetables need pollinating insects and which ones can survive without. Students also went home with seeds to grow their own pollinator gardens!

Conservation by the Numbers

- 1,620 seed packets distributed to local libraries
- Reached over 1,800 adults and 1,300 youth through social media, local work group, classroom lessons, seed libraries, and banquets
- Sold 125 feet of geotextile filter fabric

2026 District Plans

- Increase education outreach through school involvement, fairs, and workshops
- Increase social media reach through various platforms
- Increase District Affiliate Member involvement

2024 Conservation Award Recipients

Conservation District of the Year

Greenville Soil and Water
Conservation District



Conservation District Commissioner of the Year

Kirby Player, *Pickens Soil and
Water Conservation District*

Conservation District Employee of the Year

Sonya Terry, *Aiken Soil and
Water Conservation District*



2024 Conservation Award Recipients



Watershed Conservation District of the Year

Little Lynches Watershed Conservation District

Watershed Conservation District Director of the Year

James D. Little, *Cane Creek Watershed Conservation District*



Conservation Educator of the Year - Secondary Level (7-12)

Katie Martin, *Lakewood Middle School in Greenville, SC*



**Pictured are award recipients that were honored at the 2025 SC Conservation Partnership Conference in recognition of their 2024 service to conservation in South Carolina.*

Acronyms

ACEP - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

APHIS - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

CSP - Conservation Stewardship Program

EEASC - Environmental Education Association of South Carolina

EQIP - Environmental Quality Incentives Program

EWP - Emergency Watershed Program

FY - Fiscal Year (federal 10/01/24-09/31/2025; state 07/01/24-06/30/25)

FSA - Farm Service Agency

KSCB - Keep South Carolina Beautiful

LWG - Local Work Group

NACD - National Association of Conservation Districts

NASCA - National Association of State Conservation Agencies

NCF - National Conservation Foundation

NCFE - National Conservation Foundation Envirothon

NRCS - Natural Resources Conservation Service

RPP - Regenerative Pilot Program

SCACD - South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts

SCCDEA - South Carolina Conservation Districts Employees Association

SCCDF - South Carolina Conservation Districts Foundation

SCDES - South Carolina Department of Environmental Services

SCDNR-CD - South Carolina Department of Natural Resources-Conservation Districts

SCFC - South Carolina Forestry Commission

District - Soil and Water Conservation District

TA - Technical Assistance

USDA - United States of Department of Agriculture

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Contacts

SCDNR-Conservation Districts

Tyler Brown, Program Manager,
brownnty@dnr.sc.gov

Brooke Myres, Field Operations and Program
Development Manager, myresb@dnr.sc.gov

Katherine Hoffman, West Piedmont Conservation
Districts Coordinator, hoffmankm@dnr.sc.gov

Cameron Sabin, East Piedmont Conservation
Districts Coordinator, sabinc@dnr.sc.gov

Mary Bracey, Pee Dee Conservation Districts
Coordinator, braceym@dnr.sc.gov

Jennifer Morris, Edisto-Savannah Valley
Conservation Districts Coordinator,
morrisj@dnr.sc.gov

Jessica Egan, Program Development
Coordinator, eganj@dnr.sc.gov

John Hayes, Watershed Districts Coordinator,
hayesj@dnr.sc.gov

Jordan Baker, Administrative Assistant,
bakerj@dnr.sc.gov

SCACD

Ann-Lamar Tuten, Executive Director,
atuten@scacd.org

SC Conservation Districts Foundation

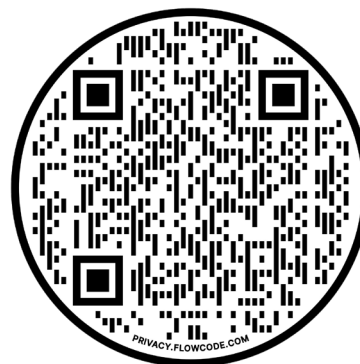
Sterling Sadler, Chair,
s.sadler5948@gmail.com

Marc Cribb, Secretary,
3scacd@gmail.com

Kirby Player, Fundraising Chair,
kplayer@clermson.edu

Local Districts

Contact information can be found through choosing
desired county from list at this website: [dnr.sc.gov/
conservation](http://dnr.sc.gov/conservation) or scanning the QR code below.



*All reports were collected from individual district, SCACD, SCCDF, and USDA-NRCS representatives. SCDNR-Conservation Districts compiled and edited individual reports to ensure consistency.

**Cover photo taken on Commissioner Bonnie Cann's Farm in Abbeville County by Jessica Egan, SCDNR.



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