

Aiken

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2023

The biggest achievement in 2023 of Aiken Soil and Water Conservation District was the district's outreach efforts in telling the story of conservation.

The district gave a \$2,500 scholarship to Zeb Proctor. Zeb is a graduate of Midland Valley High School and is attending University of SC - Aiken.

The district's Local Work Group meeting was held in June with the highest attendance to date! Through interest expressed by the Local Work Group, a partnership was formed between the district, Longleaf Alliance, and local foresters to initiate a Prescribed Burn Association for Aiken County. To date, two workshops have been hosted with more planned for 2024.

A Storm Drain Mural Contest was facilitated by the district in downtown Aiken. Five artists were selected to paint sidewalk murals depicting the message: To Protect Our Waterways which coincided with the 2023 NACD Stewardship Theme - One Water. The contest was well received through significant media attention including recognition nationally in NACD's Conservation Clips! Pictured left is the first place winner receiving recognition at a City Council meeting. Pictured right is a high school student participant who received the People's Choice Award. Artists were given a monetary award.



Other Notable Accomplishment



Aiken Soil and Water Conservation District participated in City of Aiken's Festival of Trees with a seed themed tree to advertise the district's new seed library. The seed library will be available at the main branch of the library with pop-up seed libraries offered at five satellite library branches throughout Aiken County. The district gifted Aiken County Library with SC Farm Bureau Accurate books to compliment the seed library. This partnership will promote the wise use of our soil and water reaching youth and adults interested in growing their own food.

Conservation by the Numbers

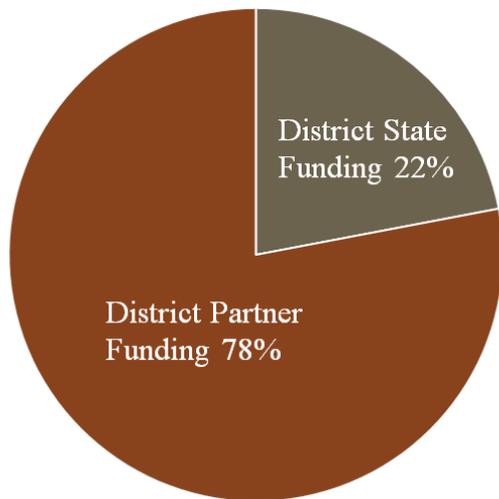
- More than 800 acres planted through no-till drill rentals
- Sponsored booths at SEED Day and City of Aiken's Earth Day with over 3,400 attendees
- Youth outreach: volunteered and donated to SC Envirothon, provided 200 t-shirts for the CSRA Eco-meet, received 140 NACD poster entries, provided hay and seed to resolve erosion issues at a local school's outdoor learning area

2024 District Plans

- Partner with Aiken County Library to offer a Seed Library and a summer program with the Farm Bureau Agricultural Mobile Learning Lab
- Participate in and sponsor the NACD Poster Contest and SC Envirothon
- Host a New and Beginning Farmer Workshop and Agricultural Awareness Day with FSA and Clemson Extension

South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts - 2023 Impact

State FY24 Conservation District Funding



For every \$1 of state appropriated funds to Conservation Districts, \$3.40 on average is leveraged to implement conservation programs in South Carolina.

Conservation Districts assist with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm Bill Programs which brought more than **\$55 million** to South Carolina's private lands for conservation implementation in federal FY23.

More than 190,000 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 2 million 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 10,000 acres statewide were impacted by conservation rental equipment available through conservation districts (no-till drills, prescribed fire equipment, hog traps, etc.).

SC Envirothon State Champions from Spartanburg Day School represented South Carolina at the 2023 international NCF-Envirothon Competition competing against teams from the US, Canada, Singapore and China.

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 Conservation Districts.