

Beaufort

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2023

In March 2023, Beaufort Soil and Water Conservation District entered into a partnership with The Nature Conservancy of SC (TNC) to conduct a one year needs assessment for working lands in Beaufort County. TNC provided the district with a grant to hire a field agent, Walter Mack, to help seek out farmers and rural landowners with an emphasis on black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). TNC wanted to get a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to regenerative farming practices, current participation and awareness of conservation programs, challenges related to climate change, and interest in participating in programs and economic markets. To date, Mr. Mack has made 29 site visits to 18 farms helping to determine the following challenges and needs: livestock fencing, protecting crops from increasing deer populations, irrigation, flooding, and saltwater intrusion in pastures and cropland. Mr. Mack arranged for farmers to meet with FSA and NRCS to apply for funding, helped them apply for agriculture tax exemption, and informed them of other agencies who offer agriculture workshops and assistance programs through the USDA Farm Bill.

Pictured are two farms visited on St. Helena Island: Mingo Savios Farm (left) and Barefoot Farms (right).



Other Notable Accomplishment



Beaufort Soil and Water Conservation District is thrilled to have hosted the 32nd Eco Camp!

Eco Camp is a hands on day camp experience that is based around a yearly theme on environmental education. This summer's theme was "There is no Earth without Art". The campers created art based on the surroundings found in their natural environment. The focus was based on conservation and protection of local wildlife through construction, sculptures, fabric dyeing, and more.

Conservation by the Numbers

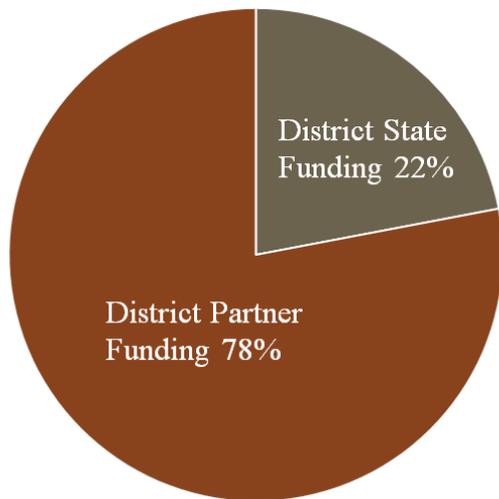
- 61 new acres enrolled in conservation programs in Beaufort County for a total of 958 acres enrolled county-wide
- 6 landowners assisted with new CSP and EQIP contracts with \$92,984 in conservation practices installed throughout Beaufort County
- 5,151 people reached at public events, festivals, Eco Camp, and classrooms with environmental education programs

2024 District Plans

- Secure permanent funding for field agent position
- Provide Beaufort County landowners with funding opportunities, agriculture workshops, and technical assistance programs
- Continue to work on Contribution Agreement with NRCS to assist with program delivery

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.