

Darlington

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2023

Darlington Soil and Water Conservation District prioritizes recognition of conservation leaders in the community. The district has been recognizing outstanding conservation farmers since 1969 with its annual Conservation Farmer of the Year Award. The 2023 award went to sibling farmers, William Kirven, IV and Caid Kirven (pictured below). The award was presented to them during the district's annual recognition dinner. William and Caid strive to grow agricultural crops in a manner that practices conservation operations by reducing wind and water erosion, improving soil health, reducing excessive nutrients and pesticides, and improving air and water quality. Practices include continuous no-till farming and the use of cover crops and GPS precision planting and fertilization regiments. Several additional practices are done daily to ensure quality along with conservation.

An additional conservation leader the district is working to recognize is W.E. Dargan (Ned). Mr. Dargan was a district commissioner from 1949 to 1993. He helped establish the Coastal Plains Soil Water Plant Research Center. The district is working with the center to sponsor a historical marker to honor Mr. Dargan's dedication to conservation.



Other Notable Accomplishment



District Commissioners and staff believe connecting with community members is of high importance for locally led conservation to thrive. To support these efforts, Administrative Assistant, Dani Chaplin, became Mayo High School's Green Step School Mentor to help them learn about sustainability. She is meeting with students and teachers to assist with composting and gardening projects. Chairman Alton Jeffords also shared his expertise in agriculture with students (pictured above).

Conservation by the Numbers

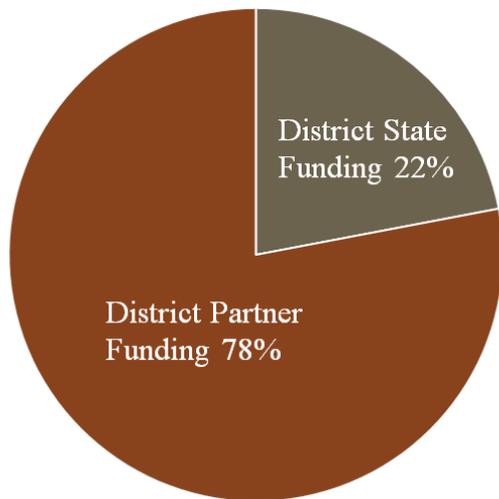
- 30,602 acres of conservation practices applied
- 77 EQIP applications and 19 CSP applications received
- 21 District Affiliate Members
- 77 students taught about horticulture

2024 District Plans

- Attain 10 new District Affiliate Members
- Develop additional programs for school outreach
- Host a workshop for local landowners
- Provide health insurance for Conservation District employee

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.