

Kershaw

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2023

Kershaw Soil and Water Conservation District hosted an affiliate tour on Saturday, October 28th. The purpose of the tour was to show appreciation to those who contributed financially to the district during the previous year and also served as an affiliate drive to gain exposure and attract others to the district's mission.

The tour took place at the Nature as Teacher Preserve (870 acres of land dedicated to educating young people about the environment) and was led by renowned naturalist and Kershaw County native, Josh Arrants. Before his move to Montana, Josh led many walks for the district that highlighted regions from Mulberry Plantation to Forty Acre Rock to the Carolina Sandhills Refuge. His return to Kershaw County seemed like somewhat of a "homecoming" for the district because he is so near and dear to many. In a recent newspaper article promoting the event, it was said of Josh, "to know him, is to love him". He has captivated many audiences across the US with his love and knowledge of "all things nature". Through this event, the district gained 10 new affiliate members -accomplishing a 2023 goal.

A special thank you to Leoncia Cruz, Josh Arrants, and the Commissioners and Associates of the district for supporting this endeavor.



Other Notable Accomplishment



The district sponsored a camp July 17-21 for 15 youth, ages 9-12.

Pictured above are a few of the campers gathered around the Goodale State Park Nature Trail. SCDNR staff, along with Nature as Teacher instructors, provided quality environmental hands-on activities. A field trip to the Environmental Discovery Center on the Lynches River concluded camp this year.

Conservation by the Numbers

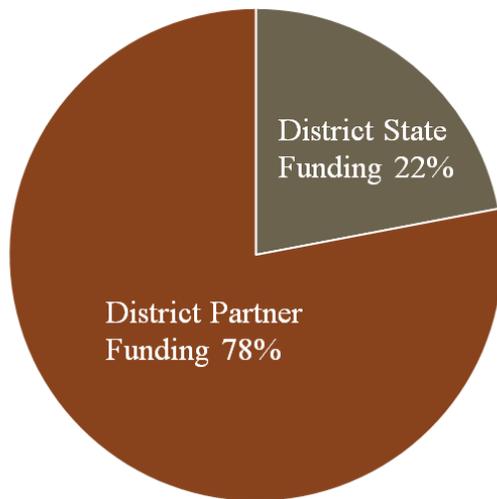
- 70 landowners received conservation technical assistance
- 200 students exposed to conservation practices through the funding of education mini-grants
- 100 students participated in stormwater and watershed education
- Approximately 200 residents reached through an outreach table at the Kershaw County Farmers Market

2024 District Plans

- Plant 100 trees for Arbor Day and Earth Day in needed areas of the county
- Engage local students in service and citizen science projects such as Adopt a Highway and CoCoRAHS
- Provide a shelter at the Nature as Teacher Preserve

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.