

Williamsburg Conservation Update

Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District

2016 Annual Report

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Board of Commissioners

Brian McClam
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Vice-Chairman

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NRCS

District Conservationist

Debbie Mann

**Conservation Program
Manager**

Trinette Vereen

Soil Conservation Tech.

Anthony Parson

Mission Statement:
The protection of our environment through the wise use of our natural resources.



L. Claude McClary Conservation Achievement Award

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District awards the L. Claude McClary Conservation Achievement Award to honor Mr. Claude for his many years of dedicated service to the conservation community and to recognize individuals or business which make a significant contribution to conservation efforts. Dr. Louis Drucker DMD was the 2016 recipient. He was recognized for his conservation efforts and stewardship of the Scenic Black River. Dr. Drucker introduced paddle sports to the Black River through his generous efforts with Wildlife Action, where he supplied the canoes and all the necessary equipment and guided novice paddlers. He has arranged access, put ins, take outs, and transportation for over 20 years. Many locals enjoy kayaking on Black River because of Dr. Drucker's selfless efforts to keep the channels clear and information flowing along Black River.



Dr. Drucker practices general dentistry in Kingstree. He is a lifelong resident of Williamsburg County, where he graduated as a Boll Weevil from Kingstree High School. He attended Clemson University, Frances Marion University and the Medical University of South Carolina. Dr. Drucker serves on the Scenic Black River Advisory Commission and is active in the Kingstree Lions Club and Wildlife Action.

He spends a great deal of time on the Black River and enjoys taking care of it. Because of his love for the Black River and his tireless efforts to educate others about it; Dr. Drucker is deserving of the 2016 L. Claude McClary Conservation Achievement Award.

Arbor Day



The conservation district partnered with the Williamsburg Historical Society to sponsor an Arbor Day demonstration. The crepe myrtle trees in front of the Williamsburg Museum were overgrown and blocking the view of the museum. Crepe Myrtle trees are very popular in this area and many people hack the limbs to the trunk when pruning; but this leaves them looking distorted. Clemson Extension Horticulturalist Tony Melton demonstrated the proper way to prune crepe myrtle trees to the spectators. He showed them how to cut and thin the branches. This allows the trees to retain their beauty and natural habitat. Conservation District Commissioner Frances McClary assisted with the trimming.

Essay Contest

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District held the annual Essay Contest in 2016. The contest was open to all students in the fourth thru eighth grade. The topic of the contest was “We All Need Trees.” Trees provide us with an amazing amount of benefits from the oxygen we breathe to food, homes and conservation. We depend on them and they depend on us for survival. The winners of the competition were: 4th grade - Josie Tisdale, 5th grade – Hayden Williams, 6th grade – Elise McCutchen all of Williamsburg Academy and 7th grade – Channler Tyler of The Kingstree Christian Academy. From the grade winners, a county winner was chosen who received an additional award. Josie Tisdale was chosen as the county winner. The teacher of the county winner, Mrs. Kathy McCullough received an award and used it to purchase plants for the school’s pollinator garden.



Camp Wildwood

Imagine a place where the energy is contagious, the environment is the beautiful outdoors and the lessons learned are about our impact on the natural environment. There is such a place – Camp Wildwood. It is held at Kings Mountain State Park in June. The District offers to sponsor two students to the camp each year. If you would like to attend, contact the district at 843-354-9621 for more information.

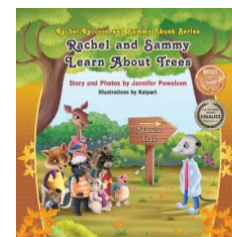
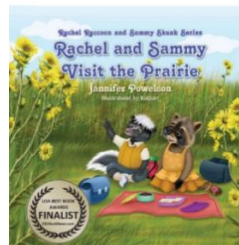
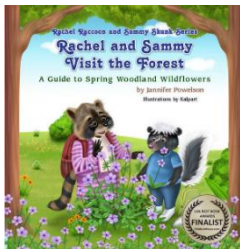
Camp Wildwood encourages self-reliance, self-discipline and independence in an outdoor setting. It is a place to learn about the diversity of our natural resources and the variety of career choices within the environmental field. 10 – 12 graders may apply.



Junior Leadership

The 4H conducts a Junior Leadership program whose purpose is to enhance knowledge of our county, assist in the development of leadership skills, and encourage participation in civic activities and projects. Following an application and interview process, high school juniors are selected to participate. The students participate in team building sessions and go on a Leadership and Citizenship Tour of Washington DC. The Williamsburg Conservation District helped to sponsor a student to attend the trip.

Earth Day



In observance of Earth Day, April 22, the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District donated three books from the Rachel and Sammy book series to the Hemingway Elementary School Library. The books were written by a SWCD resource conservationist in Illinois. They have an entertaining storyline, vivid photos, and realistic illustrations. They encourage the young readers to learn more about the natural world.

Pickney 4 H Leadership Camp



On June 26 the first Pickney 4H Leadership Conference was held at Clemson University. Sponsored by 4H, the weeklong camp inspired the high school sophomores and juniors to make a difference in their schools and communities. Activities included a leadership workshop, team building, community engagement, whitewater rafting and more. The Williamsburg Conservation District sponsored local students Destiny Williams (left) and Hope Scott to attend.

Poster Contests

Each year the District sponsors a Poster Contest for kindergarten thru third grade classes. Posters are class projects and the winning classes receive their choice of a pizza or ice cream party. The topic of the contest was “We All Need Trees” which helped the students to learn about the many ways which we need and depend on trees. The winners were: 1st Grade – Mrs. Bynum’s class at DP Cooper Charter School: 2nd Grade – Ms. Cola’s class at DP Cooper Charter School and 3rd Grade – Ms. Grant’s class at The Kingtree Christian Academy. The classes received a pizza or ice cream party as their prize.



1st Grade



2nd Grade



3rd Grade

FFA Competition

In February, the District helped to sponsor the Future Farmers of America, Wildlife Career Development Competition which hosted over 200 students from around the state. The competition is among the most scientifically challenging of all the events conducted by the SC FFA Organization. Preparation requires considerable study and practice in the classroom and outdoor settings. The event was conducted by faculty of the Forestry Management Technology Program of Horry-Georgetown Technical College. FFA teams from high schools across South Carolina competed for the title of State Champion. The competition included both hands-on practical exam questions about animal skins, skulls, management tools and a written exam. Natural resource professionals were in attendance to talk to students about careers. Professor James Westerhold, who teaches wildlife management at HGTC, said, “This is a great opportunity for young people to share their career goals or explore job options in natural resource management.”



4H Camp



The Conservation District sponsored two students to attend 4-H Summer Camp in 2016. It offers traditional camp activities with plenty of fun, friends and adventure. The activities included swimming and canoeing, high adventure elements and climbing tower, nature hikes and team sports, archery and riflery, nightly skits and games, dance and talent show and 4H animals. It is held at Camp Bob Cooper in Summerton and at Camp Long in Aiken.



Photo Contest



The Conservation District sponsors a photography contest for students in the 9 -12 grades. Students may enter in any of the four categories: Trees, Native Wildlife, Landscapes, or Rural Life. The 2016 winners were Daveetra Covert, Madison Phillips, Ashley Becigneul and Savannah Capers. Their winning photos which captured images of life and nature in Williamsburg County will be displayed in the District office.

Board Meetings

The Board of Commissioners meet on the first Tuesday of each month to address the issues related to conservation and the natural resources in Williamsburg County. In 2016 to become better informed and gain needed information on local issues the board met with Seth Cook of the Pee Dee Land Trust who presented the board members with information on conservation easements. They also met with Beau Sorenson of NRCS who is the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations and with Ken Sales, the Williamsburg County Implementation Director.

SC Forest Facts

Who owns SC timberland? 5% by the public, 5% by national forest, 16% by forest industry, and 74% by non-industrial private landowners.

Timber is South Carolina's largest cash crop, with an annual delivered value of over \$876 million.

Wood products are the 3rd largest manufacturing industry in the state, employing over 32,000 residents and contributing \$8.5 billion annually to our economy.

Forested timberlands occupy approximately two-thirds (12.3 million acres) of South Carolina's land area.

There are over 88,000 forest land owners.

Forest products are grown and processed in every county.

State law requires that you notify the South Carolina Forestry Commission prior to burning outdoors.

In Williamsburg County call 1-800-517-9643.

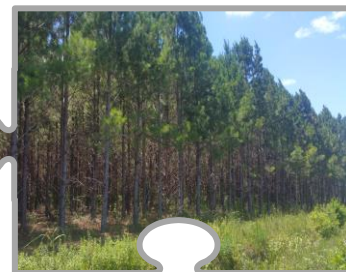
For Forestry, Wildlife or Agriculture burning, call 1-800-777-FIRE (3473).



NRCS Conservation Programs update



NRCS offers voluntary programs to eligible landowners and agricultural producers to provide financial and technical assistance to help manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. Through these programs the agency approves contracts to provide financial assistance and to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns or opportunities to help save energy, improve soil, water, plant, air, animal and related resources on agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land. The 2014 farm bill is currently being implemented.



Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

Although the CTA program does not include financial or cost-share assistance, clients may develop conservation plans, which may serve as a springboard for those interested in participating in USDA financial assistance programs.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, NRCS develops contracts with agricultural producers to implement conservation practices to address natural resource problems such as watering systems for livestock, conservation tillage, Seasonal High Tunnels and many other practices. In 2016, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 29 contracts totaling \$336,019 on 2,024 acres.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Through the Conservation Stewardship Program participants take additional steps to improve resource conditions including soil quality, water quality, air quality, and habitat quality, as well as energy. CSP provides two types of payments through five-year contracts: annual payments for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices; and supplemental payments for adopting a resource-conserving crop rotation. In 2016, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 43 new and re-enrolled contracts totaling \$241,006.00 on 24,616 acres.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program provided financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easement component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easement component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands.



2016 AFFILIATE MEMBERS UPDATE

The Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District would like to recognize our Affiliate Members who are a vital part of our conservation team. Without the monetary support given by the Affiliates, we would not be able to carry out the many programs to promote conservation stewardship within the county. The Conservation District is committed to helping the landowners and educating the students of Williamsburg County. Thank you Affiliates! **The District has added a level to our affiliate membership in which the money is specifically used to send students to one of the conservation camps available.**

CAMP FUND CONTRIBUTORS

DSM

PLATINUM

Mrs. Marjorie L. Avent
Wake Stone Corporation
Charles Ingram Lumber Co., Inc.
Longland Plantation
Williamsburg County Farm
Bureau

GOLD

Kingstree Forest Products
Palmetto Synthetics, LLC
Bank of Greeleyville
Anderson Brothers Bank
The Citizens Bank
S2 Farms LLC
Farmers Telephone Company
Santee Cooper

SILVER

H. E. Hemingway
Irwin McIntosh Farms, Inc.
Richard A. Gamble
Never Fail Farm

REGULAR

Archie Ward
Williamsburg County
Development Board
John and Paula Snow

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