

# *Williamsburg Conservation Update*

## *Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District*

### *2017 Annual Report*

502 Martin Luther King Jr. Highway, Kingstree, SC 29556  
843-354-9621 ext. 3 phone 855-589-9002 fax

#### **Board of Commissioners**

Brian McClam  
Chairman

Jayne D. Carsten  
Vice-Chairman

Frances McClary  
Secretary & Treasurer

Atwood McIntosh

Scott Williamson

#### **Associate Commissioners**

Charles B. Cantley

Ruth E. Brown

Rupert Burrows

Oneal Bluefort

#### **Commissioner Emeritus**

Richard A. Gamble

William D. Bodiford

James J. Dukes Jr.

#### **District Coordinator**

Denise Smith

#### **NRCS**

#### **District Conservationist**

Andrew Lee

#### **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 annually awards the L. Claude McClary, Conservation Achievement Award. It was named to honor Mr. Claude McClary for his many years of dedicated service to the Conservation District. The award is to recognize individuals or business which make a significant contribution to conservation efforts.

This year the award will be given to two individuals because of their significant influence in the community and conservation efforts. The recipients are At McIntosh and Rupert Burrows.

At McIntosh grew up on the farm and became a farmer at a young age. In 2005 he graduated from Francis Marion University with a Masters in Business Administration. After graduation he returned home and began farming full time. He grows corn, cotton and peanuts in the Workman community where his family has been farming for eight generations.

In 2014 he combined his business knowledge with his love of farming and started his company, Homegrown Cotton. At wanted a business that reflected how locally grown cotton could be used to produce a high quality product. From the field to your home, the polo shirts are ginned, spun, dyed, knitted, cut and sewn by local businesses in the Carolina's, with the final shirt completed within 40 miles of the farm.

At's company is a great example of the many aspects of the ag industry, the opportunities and contributions of keeping it local, and the conservation benefits it provides.

Rupert Burrows, grew up on the family farm, but branched out and began farming on his own in 1998. He attended North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University where he studied agronomy and plant science, which fed his interest in soils and changed the way he farmed.

Rupert plants a rotation of corn, soybeans and wheat. Three years ago he added cover crops to his crop rotation, and is also participating in the Soil Health Initiative Research Project to track the benefits of his conservation practices with the addition of cover crops and conservation tillage.

Rupert is a great promoter of soil health and the benefits of cover crops. He participated in a recent workshop sponsored by the Conservation District and has introduced several farmers to cover crops by sharing his experiences. He is always looking for ways to improve his farm.

## Essay Contest



The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District held the annual Essay Contest in 2017. The contest was open to all students in the fourth thru eighth grade. The topic of the contest was “Healthy Soils Are Full of Life.” Productive soils are the foundation of any healthy ecosystem. As the world’s population grows and demand



for food production increases, it’s essential that we learn to work together to protect and enhance our soils. The winners of the competition were: 4<sup>th</sup> grade Winner Malcolm Salters, and 2<sup>nd</sup> place Adrianna Green both of Greeleyville Elementary School. 5<sup>th</sup> grade Winner Megan Gibbons and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Ray Wadford both of Williamsburg Academy. From the grade winners, a county winner was chosen who received an additional award. Megan Gibbons was chosen as the county winner. The teacher of the county winner, Mrs. Kathy McCullough received an award to be used for conservation concerns in her classroom. She received the same award in 2016 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.



## 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.”



## New District Conservationist

NRCS welcomes Andrew Lee as the District Conservationist in Williamsburg County. Andrew is a native of Virginia and graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Wildlife Science, as well as a degree in Forestry. Andrew comes to South Carolina from the Yuba City Field Office in southern California, where he worked as a Soil Conservationist for two years. Prior to working for NRCS, Andrew served as a Wildlife Biologist for five years with Florida Fish and Wildlife. His work focused on assisting landowners and the NRCS to plan and implement habitat improvement projects through EQIP and WHIP, with a focus on Longleaf Pine restoration and prescribed burning.





## Pickney 4 H Leadership Camp

In June the 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 two local students 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 “Healthy Soils Are Full of Life” which helped the students to learn about the different types of soil and what is needed for healthy soil. The winners were: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – Ms. Bufkin’s Class at Greeleyville Elementary School; and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Mr. Singletary’s Class at Greeleyville Elementary School.



1<sup>st</sup> Grade



3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

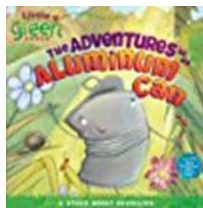
## Teacher’s Classroom Award

The Conservation District offers an award to assist teachers with conservation education in the classroom. It is available to sixth grade classes. In 2017 Crystal Mercer’s class at Williamsburg Academy won the award for their “Project Feeder Watch”. The students installed a bird feeding station along with a “spy cam” which they used to video feedings on selected days. The class viewed the recordings and kept a tally of the number of each species and then entered the data on the Project Feeder Watch webpage. This information helps to monitor the different species both common and rare. They are the best barometers of the health of our environment.

The students painted some of the bird houses. They were placed outside in the school butterfly garden. A video recorder was also purchased and placed on the top of one of the feeders. Students will be able to view the types of birds and then make a recording of the findings.



## Earth Day



In observance of Earth Day, April 22, the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District donated three books to the Greeleyville Elementary School Library from the new “green” book series. Little Green Books educate children on what they can do to be more eco-friendly. The books in this line are made from recycled materials, and the theme of the books was recycling. Also a big book on Mysteries in the Soil was given to the library. It gives great information about the soil and it features large photos which capture the students’ attention. It is great for lower school and it is written in two languages.

## Board Meetings

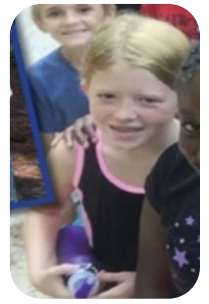
The Board of Commissioners meet on the first Tuesday of each month to address the issues related to conservation and the natural resources in Williamsburg County. In 2017 two new associate commissioners were added to the board. Rupert Burrows and Oneal Bluefort, both local farmers, were added to the Board in March.



## 4H Camp

The Conservation District sponsored three students to attend 4-H Summer Camp in 2017. It offers traditional camp activities with plenty of fun, friends and adventure. The activities included swimming and canoeing, high adventure elements and a 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.

Local students Gracie Williamson, Billy Williamson and Billy Godwin were sponsored by the District to attend.



## 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 2017 winners were Bryan McKenzie, Madison Phillips, and Shawn Becigneul. Their winning photos which captured images of life and nature in Williamsburg County will be displayed in the District office.

## Cover Crop Workshop

On March 8, 2017 the Williamsburg Conservation District hosted a cover crop workshop in Kingstree. The workshop helped demonstrate the benefits of using cover crops and how they protect and improve the soil. The workshop featured speakers Buzz Kloot, Carl Coleman, Rupert Burrows and Jeff Lucas who addressed weed control, herbicide management, farming with cover crops and making cover crops pay. A demonstration of DNR's rainfall simulator displayed the amount of water that is retained by cover crops. With over fifty in attendance, the workshop was very successful.

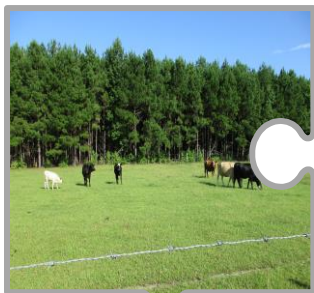


## Junior Leadership

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.



# NRCS Conservation Programs



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 2017, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 24 new contracts totaling \$210,426 on 1390.2 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 2017, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 15 new and contracts totaling \$124,479 on 3856.1 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.



## **2017 AFFILIATE MEMBERS**

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**

Wake Stone Corporation  
Charles Ingram Lumber Co., Inc.  
Carsten Farms Inc.  
Farmers Telephone Company  
Longland Plantation  
Williamsburg County Farm  
Bureau

### **GOLD**

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

### **SILVER**

H. E. Hemingway  
Marjorie L. Avent  
Richard A. Gamble

### **SILVER**

Irwin McIntosh Farms, Inc.  
Never Fail Farm  
Charles R. Barwick  
Williamsburg County  
Development Board

### **REGULAR**

Bestway  
Archie Ward