

Williamsburg Conservation Update

Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District

2018 Annual Report

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

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NRCS

District Conservationist

Kelli Coleman

Soil Conservation Tech.

Anthony Parson

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



Monsanto Award

Williamsburg County farmer Will Carsten directed a \$2,500 donation to the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District as part of the



America's Farmers Grow Communities program, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund.

As part of their mission, the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District will use the funds to provide educational opportunities for local students. The District sponsors these students to attend camps and programs including 4H Camp, Camp Wildwood, the Pickney Leadership Camp, the 4H Junior Leadership and Citizenship Tour, The SC Commissioners School for Agriculture, and other various opportunities throughout the year. "The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank Will Carsten for his generous consideration to receive the America's Farmers Grow Communities Award. What Mr. Carsten has done for our board is allow children the opportunity to experience several camps and programs related to protecting and managing our natural resources that they may otherwise never experience" said, Brian McClam, Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District Chairman.

Since the program began in 2010, the Grow Communities program has partnered with farmers to support nonprofit organizations important to them in their local communities. The organizations reflect the makeup and character of rural America.

"Farmers play a pivotal role in rural communities, and through their commitment to the Grow Communities program, we are able to provide the monetary support these nonprofit organizations need to make an impact," said Al Mitchell, Monsanto Fund president. "We're proud to play a part in helping these rural communities grow and thrive."

Cover Crop Workshop

On February 8, 2018 the Williamsburg Conservation District hosted a cover crop workshop. The workshop helped demonstrate the benefits of using cover crops and how they protect and improve the soil.

The workshop featured speakers Buzz Klood, Carl Coleman, Rupert Burrows, Jeff Lucas and Lee VanVlake 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. Participants gained knowledge which will help lower pesticide and fertilizer use while improving the soil organic matter and causing less water runoff and higher yields.



New District Conservationist



In September of 2018 NRCS welcomed a new District Conservationist to the Kingstree office. Kelli Coleman, who grew up in Hawkinsville Georgia, a small farming community where peanuts and cotton are the main crops. Kelli earned a B.S. in Environmental Soil Science and a Masters in Agronomy from the University of Georgia. She has been with NRCS for 8 years. Her career began in Georgia working with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts for five years on outreach, education, and conservation implementation. Kelli then began a career with the Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Soil Conservation Technician in Conrad, Montana. Two years later she became a Soil Conservationist. In February of 2018 Kelli became the Acting District Conservationist in the Browning Tribal Service Center on the Blackfeet Reservation. Notably during that time, the Blackfeet Reservation was put under a State of Emergency by both the Tribal Council and the Montana Governor due to one of the harshest winters on recent record. The local office was able to assist and provide information on partner programs available to Blackfeet producers who were experiencing cattle losses and who had completely exhausted their winter feed supplies, with several months of winter still to go. Kelli said "While Montana was an amazing experience, I am excited for this new opportunity to get conservation on the ground as the District Conservationist in Kingstree, SC."

Board Meetings

The Board of Commissioners meet on the first Tuesday of even months to address the issues related to conservation and the natural resources in Williamsburg County. If you have any concerns, contact the district at 843-354-9621 ext. 3. You can visit the District's website at www.williamsburgswcd.com.

Livestock and Forestry Workshop



The Conservation District held a livestock and Forestry Workshop in Kingstree on July 26, 2018. Lee Vanvlake of Clemson Extension provided information about grazing management practices of livestock herds. He covered the types of forages needed in summer and winter and gave information about them. Lee explained how winter forages are incorporated into planted pastures and how it effects herd health management. Ron Holt of the SC Forestry Commission presented information on managing forests including growing and harvesting. He stressed the importance of managing timber as a crop and prescribed fire as a management tool. Ron spoke about silvopastures including the planting process and how it works best after the thinning process. He answered questions about harvesting timber and pricing.

Essay Contest



The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District holds an annual essay contest for all students in the fourth thru eighth grades in Williamsburg County. The purpose of the contest is to help youth learn about our natural resources and ways they can

help protect them. The topic of the contest in 2018 was “Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home”. Water is one of our most precious resources and watersheds supply water for our needs including drinking, recreation, irrigation, manufacturing, and wildlife habitat. It is essential that each of us adopts good water conservation habits so that we can keep our water resources safe and productive now and for future generations. The students’ essays explored many good ways to protect and preserve our watersheds.

Seventy-two essays were submitted as part of the contest. The winners were: 5th Grade Winner – Alexis Lester and 2nd Place - Lauren Darby both of Greeleyville Elementary. 6th Grade Winner - Alexander McKenzie and 2nd

Place - Landon Strong both of Williamsburg Academy, 7th Grade Winner - Holdon Baylor and 2nd Place - Delana Miller both of Williamsburg Academy. From the grade winners, a county winner is chosen who receives an additional award. The County Winner for 2018 was Holdon Baylor.



Poster Contest

Each year the District sponsors a Poster Contest for kindergarten thru third grade classes in the county. Posters are class projects and the winning class receives their choice of a pizza or ice cream party. Mrs. Pam Williamson’s third grade class at Williamsburg Academy won first place in 2018. The topic of the contest was “Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home”. Their poster was creative and displayed many ways our watershed supports our daily lives. The class received an ice cream party as their prize.

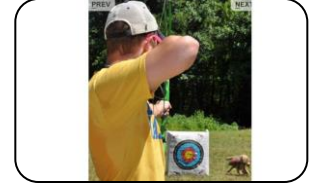


Mrs. Pam Williamson’s Class

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 individual and team prizes and 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.” The winning team will earn a trip from the college to the national competition.

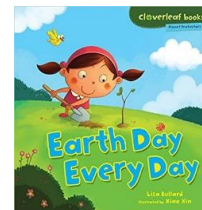
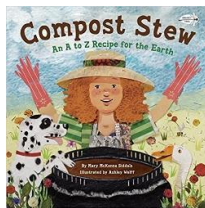


Teacher's Classroom Award



The Conservation District offers an award to assist teachers with conservation education in the classroom. It is available to sixth grade classes. In 2018, Crystal Mercer's class at Williamsburg Academy won the award for their project, “Water, Water Everywhere”. Water is a very large part of our lives and without it we could not survive. The class explored ways to conserve water and keep it clean. They discovered what is in their school tap water by using reagent tablets to test for pH, chlorine, hardness, iron and copper. The students also utilized sun-sensitive paper to create a “sunprint” for different objects. They also used the Audubon Adventures Student Nature News Magazine for water conservation activities.

Earth Day



In observance of Earth Day, April 22, the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District donated three books to the Kenneth Gardner Elementary School Library from the new “green” book series. The books in this line are made from recycled materials and the storylines cover subjects such as improving the environment, learning about endangered animals, recycling, and much more.

Compost Stew gives information on how to start a compost pile and what to put in it. It provides answers for kids and families looking for simple, child-friendly ways to help the planet. In *I Can Save The Earth* kids can follow Max the Little Green Monster’s journey to environmental awareness and learn tips on how they can become little green monsters themselves. *Earth Day Every Day* discusses how children can help the planet by planting trees, starting an environmental club and learning to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Senior Award

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District offers a \$500.00 scholarship to a high school senior with an interest in one of the many fields of conservation. The 2018 recipient of the award was Hampton Beard. Hampton is a 2018 graduate of Williamsburg Academy. Hampton has loved farming since he was young and is excited about having a career in agriculture. His granddaddy, Carroll Haddock, assisted him with growing his own soybean crop for the last few years. After graduation, he wants to carry on in his granddaddy’s footsteps by farming crops of cotton, soybeans, and corn.

Hampton is employed by 3M Farms where he has worked with conservation practices including cover crops and strip tilling. An avid outdoorsman, Hampton enjoys hunting, fishing, gardening, and being a member of the Black River Clay Crushers skeet shooting team. Hampton’s strong work ethic and love for the profession will bring him much success. Hampton enrolled in Piedmont Technical College in the fall of 2018 to major in Diversified Agriculture.



4H Camp



The Conservation District sponsored four students to attend 4-H Summer Camp in 2018. 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, talent show and 4H animals. It is held at Camp Bob Cooper in Summerton and at Camp Long in Aiken. Local students, Christian and Lauren Lawrence and Gracie and Billy Williamson were sponsored by the District to attend.



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 their trip.

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 2018 winner was Lane Phillips. His winning photos captured images of life and nature in Williamsburg County. The winning photos are displayed in the Williamsburg Conservation District office.

Litter Busters Hotline

PalmettoPride sponsors a statewide Litter Busters Hotline so you can report litterbugs. The program, made possible thanks to the cooperation of the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles, works like this:

You spot someone tossing litter from an automobile. You immediately call...

877-7LITTER (754-8837)

...and report the location, time and the litterbug's license number. An answering service will take the Hotline calls in an effort to make sure that the lines are always open. You can also report a violation from the website by filling in a form at <http://palmettopride.org/enforcement/report-a-litterbug/>.

The litterbug will receive a letter from SCDMV informing him or her that they can't get away with littering in South Carolina. The letter will explain that if a law enforcement officer had witnessed the littering, it could have resulted in a serious fine or even jail time.



Litter Busters

Water Use Calculator

Would you like to estimate your daily water use? This calculator helps you estimate your total water use. You know water comes from the tap, but do you know how much water goes into your sandwich? Your gadgets? The electricity that powers them? Go to www.watercalculator.org and answer a few questions to get your water footprint.

Knowing how much water you use, is the first step in beginning to conserve one of our most precious resources. This calculator helps you to track your indoor and outdoor consumption.



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 2018 farm bill has passed and will be implemented over the next five years.



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 2018, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 13 new contracts totaling \$163,193 on 482.8 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 2018, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 10 new and contracts totaling \$213,454 on 2713.80 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.



2018 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

PLATINUM

Wake Stone Corporation
Mishoe Insurance Agency
Longland Plantation
Charles Ingram Lumber Co., Inc.
Carsten Farms Inc.
Farmers Telephone Company
Bank of Greeleyville
Williamsburg County Farm
Bureau

GOLD

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

SILVER

H. E. Hemingway
Charles R. Barwick
Never Fail Farm

SILVER

Williamsburg County
Development Board
Irwin McIntosh Farms, Inc.
Archie Ward

REGULAR

Bestway

Williamsburg County Soil & Water
Conservation District
502 Martin Luther King Jr. Hwy.
Kingstree, SC 29556
Phone: (843) 354-9621 ext. 3
Fax: 855-589-9002

