

Williamsburg Conservation Update

Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District

2019 Annual Report

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District Coordinator

Denise Smith

NRCS

District Conservationist

Kelli Coleman

Soil Conservation Tech.

Anthony Parson

Soil Conservationist

Jabril Wright

Mission Statement:

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



Learn to Burn Workshop

On February 5, 2019 the Williamsburg Conservation District partnered with the South Carolina Forestry Commission to hold a workshop to show the proper burn techniques. It was geared toward landowners with low to moderate burning experience.



Forestry personnel demonstrated for the attendees a prescribed fire burn. They taught the importance of burning your woods, with the proper pre-planning and post-burn follow up information. Liability issues were discussed, and the experienced professionals answered questions.



Forester Ron Holt explained why landowners should burn their woods and showed the proper pre-burn preparations including a burn plan, SCFC notification, and firebreaks. Grace Anna Cooper assisted the burn



and gave information on the fuels in your forest, setting a test fire, and burn techniques. Holt told about how to get assistance and cost share programs. The crew showed how to monitor the fire and “mop up” after the burn and evaluate it. Holt demonstrated the proper burning tools to use. The burn was conducted on eight acres of Ruth Brown’s property in the Cedar Swamp Community.



Cover Crop Project

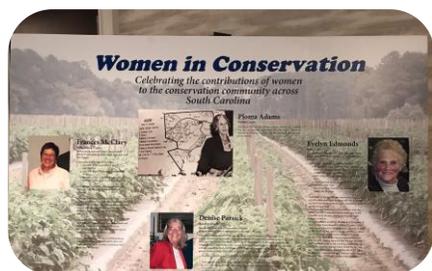
A cover crop is just what it sounds like: a crop that covers the soil during the off season. In an effort to boost the use of cover crops in the county; the board of commissioners offered some assistance to landowners interested in transitioning to cover crops. William Johnson was the first recipient of aid in the project. He planted 25 acres of cover crop which included blue lupine, rye and tillage radish. Cover crops are planted by farmers in between the harvest of one crop and the planting of another. The cover crops help to keep the soil from eroding and returns nutrients and benefits to the soil for future crops. They also help to reduce the presence of weeds in the fields and help hold moisture in the soil.



McClary Honored at Conference

Williamsburg Conservation

District Commissioner Frances McClary was featured on the “Women in Conservation” Display during the 2019 Partnership Conference held in Columbia. It highlighted her accomplishments and activities to preserve and protect our resources. Commissioner McClary has always felt a strong connection to the land. She has worked with forestland since 1981 as a



private landowner and tree farmer. Over the years she has been exposed to many aspects of agriculture. McClary is an advocate of all natural resources and has planted and managed longleaf pine on her farm. She believes that it is important to work with new landowners in the county to make sure they are aware of the value of the land and our everyday impact on the natural resources. As a commissioner she has helped with workshops and assisted with educational programs in the local schools to teach the landowners and the youth the value of protecting the land. McClary’s deep concern for the land and strong voice for the protection and management of our natural resources is why she was one of only four chosen from across the state to receive this honor.

Carsten Retires and Brown Selected

The Board of Commissioners saw changes in the past year as longtime Commissioner Jayne Carsten retired from the Board. Carsten has been a commissioner since April of 1993 giving her over 25 years of service to the Board. She has served in all capacities on the Board and been an invaluable asset. Marc Cribb presented Carsten with a certificate declaring her a Commissioner Emeritus and he thanked her for the many years of dedicated service and valuable contributions to the Board.

Ruth Brown was chosen by the DNR Board to fill the vacancy. Brown has served as an Associate

Commissioner for the last six years and was willing to step up and serve. DNR Program Manager, Tyler Brown, administered the Oath of Office to Brown and welcomed her.



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. Conservation Districts provide assistance to landowners in South Carolina's forty-six soil and water conservation districts aimed at improving soil health, water quality, erosion control and benefits to wildlife. The Districts also educate citizens about the need for habitat conservation and wise land use. In 2019, the Board of Commissioners met with Grace Anna Cooper of the SC Forestry Commission, Lisa Lord with The Longleaf Alliance, Amanda Strickland, Tyler Brown and Marc Cribb with the SC Department of Natural Resources to form better working partnerships.

New Soil Conservationist



On May 27th NRCS welcomed a new soil conservationist to the office. Jabril Wright grew up in Orangeburg where he discovered he has a passion for the environment and likes being outdoors. He attended North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University where he majored in environmental studies. The 22-year-old began his career with NRCS training for the soil conservationist position by working in the Greenwood, Bishopville and Bamberg offices. He enjoys playing basketball, working out and traveling. Jabril is eager to work with the landowners to put conservation on the ground.

The Present and the Past

Things change as we gain new technology and conservation methods but the need to educate the public is the same today as it was in the past. In the photo on the left Forester Ron Holt teaches the attendees of the Learn to Burn Workshop on Feb. 5, 2019 about burning methods.



In the photo on the right from January 8 of 1970 Forester Earl Wiegand discusses site prep and tree planting at the Woodland-Wildlife Field Day.



Senior Award

Craig Holt McFadden was chosen to receive the Senior Conservation Achievement Award of the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District for 2019. Craig graduated from Williamsburg Academy and plans to attend Clemson University or Horry Georgetown Technical College to pursue a degree in Forestry Management Technology with a Wildlife Path. Craig works at Kingtree Forest Products and his goal is to become a registered forester. He is the son of Craig and Laura McFadden. Craig has been very active in sports at school playing football and baseball. He also enjoys hunting, fishing and all kinds of outdoor activities. He is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the National Honor Society, the Leo Club and participates in mission projects with his church youth group. He will use the \$500 award to help offset school expenses. Craig is pictured with Headmaster Glenn Matthews.



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 students who are accepted to the camp each year.



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.



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 2019 was “Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper”. The students explored many ways in their essays that we need healthy soil in our daily lives for food, clothing, clean water, and homes. They

researched how healthy soil equals a healthy you and the difference between soil and dirt. They did a great job on their essays making the judging very difficult. There were essays submitted for the contest

The winners were: 4th Grade Winner – Justin Steward and 2nd Place – Jayden Lide both from Greeleyville Elementary, 5th Grade Winner – Leighten Powell and 2nd Place – Carson Ann McCutchen both of Williamsburg Academy. 6th Grade Winner – Wyatt Floyd and 2nd Place – Reece Barrineau both of Williamsburg Academy, 7th Grade Winner – Cassidy McCutcheon and 2nd Place – Landon Eaddy both of Williamsburg Academy. 8th Grade Winner – Brock Hundley and 2nd Place – Holdon Baylor both of Williamsburg Academy. From the grade winners, a county winner is chosen who receives an additional award. The County Winner for 2019 was Brock Hundley. Mrs. Crystal Mercer at WA was the teacher of the county winner enabling her to receive funds to conduct a project for the classroom. She chose a project in the category of environmental and life sciences. It is a two-part project – the first a Protozoan Pond Study in which the students prepare protozoan cultures and explore the different forms of protozoans. The second part is a decomposition and compost study in which the students learned about decomposition and composting hands on.

Pollinator Week

National Pollinator Week is a time to celebrate pollinators and spread the word about what you can do to protect them. The US Senate approved the designation of a week in June as “National Pollinator Week” which marked a necessary step toward addressing the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations. It is a celebration of the valuable ecosystem services provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats, and beetles. You can go to the NACD website at <https://www.nacdnet.org/about-nacd/what-we-do/pollinators/> to see what you can do right in your own backyard to help.

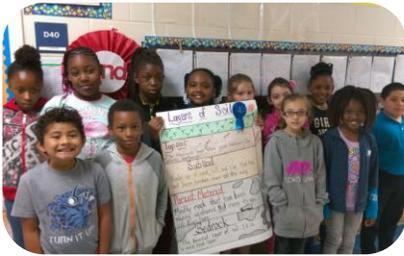


Earth Day



In observance of Earth Day, April 22, the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District donated these conservation education books to the Williamsburg Academy Library/Media Center. The books encourage the importance of taking care of our special planet through environmental awareness and sustainability. The books are aimed at lower school children and present the information in fun and creative ways with vivid illustrations. Also, conservation comic books were given to Mrs. Crystal Mercer's class at WA. The books teach about forest and woody biomass. Sammy Soil coloring books were donated to the lower school students at the school. It focuses on soil and water conservation by showing the children what happens to the soil when good practices are not followed, and erosion occurs.

Poster Contest

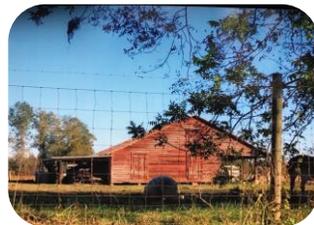


Each year the District sponsors a Poster Contest for kindergarten thru third grade classes in the county. Posters are class projects and the winning class receives their choice of a pizza or ice cream party. Mrs. Nesmith's second grade class at Hemingway Elementary and Mrs. Cox's third grade class



at Williamsburg Academy won first place in 2019. The topic of the contest was "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper". Their posters were very creative and explored the many layers of soil and showed the need for soil in our daily lives. The class received a pizza or ice cream party as their prize.

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 2019 winners were Lauren Williamson, Jordan Slavinski, and Lane Phillips. Their winning photos captured images of life and nature in Williamsburg County. The winning photos are displayed in the Williamsburg Conservation District office.

4H Camps



The Conservation District sponsored four students to attend 4-H Summer Camp in 2019. Local students, Titus Owens, Austin Harrell, Lizzie McGee and Wyatt Floyd were sponsored by the District to attend. The camps offer 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. Rising 6th graders Titus and Austin attended Camp Long in Aiken and Lizzie and Wyatt attended Camp Bob Cooper in Summerton. Austin said, “I would recommend other kids to go to Camp Long to enjoy the swimming, archery, rifle shooting, rock climbing, and the coolest campfire anywhere!” Titus said he “met a lot of new friends at camp and learned how to shoot a gun and bow”. Tracey Stuckey, the boy’s teacher at Hemingway Day School, said “I can’t think of a better way to invest on the minds of tomorrow!”



Titus Owens Austin Harrell

FFA Wildlife Career Development Event

The District annually sponsors the Future Farmers of America, Wildlife Career Development Competition, which hosts 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 is conducted by faculty of the Forestry Management Technology Program of Horry-Georgetown Technical College. FFA teams from high schools across South Carolina compete for individual and team prizes and the title of State Champion. The winning team will earn a trip from the college to the national competition. The National FFA Organization is committed to the individual student, providing a path to achievement in premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. It helps the members to develop their own unique talents and explore their interests in a broad range of agricultural career pathways. The 2019 winning team was Pelion High School with Aynor in second place and Belton Honea-Path in third.





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 2019, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 12 new contracts totaling \$246,883.9 on 945.2 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 2019, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 10 new and contracts totaling \$203,574 on 2,350.5 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.



All programs and services of the Conservation District, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and DNR-Land, Water and Conservation Division are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital status, political beliefs or handicap.

2019 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 Camp Fund Contributors is a level in which the money is specifically used to send students to one of the conservation camps available.**

CAMP FUND CONTRIBUTORS

DSM Nutritional Products

PLATINUM

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

GOLD

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

SILVER

H. E. Hemingway
Richard A. Gamble
Archie B. Ward
Charles R. Barwick
Williamsburg County
Development Board
E. Heyward Baker

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