

Williamsburg Conservation Update Annual Report 2022

The Williamsburg Conservation District determines the conservation needs in the county and implements programs to solve environmental problems and promote conservation education. It has a board of five commissioners plus associates who volunteer their time to work as public officials and partner with SC DNR and NRCS.



Beaver Management Project

Beaver have become an increasing problem in the county with the beaver stopping up waterways and flooding fields and roads. Residents of the Millwood, Central, and Cedar Swamp communities have been affected by the flooding of Doc Kellahan Road due to the beaver damming the culverts. The beaver had dammed three culverts that cross under the road, creating a substantial impoundment on the southwest side of the road. Heavy rains cause flooding and washouts on the road making it impassable. In an effort to stop the damage, the Williamsburg Conservation District began an experimental project this year to prevent them from backing up water on the roads. In June new pipes were installed by the county on the affected road. Then the district funded the fencing constructed around the intake side of the culverts to prevent beavers access to the pipes. The beaver excluders were connected to the pipes. This work was done by volunteers, Clay Cooper, Josh McCrea, and Wayne Smith for the District. The excluders prevent the beaver from getting into the pipes and stopping them up. Local landowners agreed to maintain the excluders by removing any small debris that collects on them. So far they have been effective in preventing the beaver from clogging the pipes.

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Camp Longridge

The Williamsburg Conservation attend Camp Longridge for a fun Williamsburg Academy students



District sponsored two students to adventurous summer experience. Jake Hedrick, and Aaron Ottinger

attended the weeklong camp. It offers outdoor opportunities for all ages with a 35-foot-high rope course, canoeing, archery, walking trail, zipline, swimming, and a climbing wall. It also offers many sports including basketball, gaga ball, and volleyball. The students truly enjoyed their experience and were thankful for the opportunity to attend and make new lifelong friendships and memories.







SC Wildlife Magazine



South Carolina Wildlife magazine has a long tradition of helping young people and adults learn about the importance of the environment and the

value of our state's natural resources. The magazine's statement of purpose, included on the Contents Page of each issue, says it best — "Dedicated to the conservation, protection and restoration of our wildlife and natural resources, and to the education of our people to the value of these resources". The magazine is an extremely valuable tool to teach the youth, therefore the Williamsburg Conservation District offers to donate a year's subscription to school libraries in the county. This makes the magazine available to countless students for study and enjoyment. The Hemingway Day School was sponsored to receive the magazine in 2022.

Earth Day

Earth Day is a day to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth. It is celebrated on April 22 each year. It was founded by Senator Nelson after



he observed a horrific oil spill at Santa Barbara. Senator Nelson announced his idea for a nationwide day of awareness for the environment and hoped that he could convince others how concerned Americans were about the environment. The first official Earth Day was observed in 1970 and has been The celebrated everv vear since. Williamsburg District Conservation participated in Earth Day events by donating pollinator seed packages to all 4th grade students in the county. The seed mix will nurture pollinators like bees, butterflies, birds, and more.

Learn to Burn Workshop

Fire is a necessary tool in forest management. But it is very dangerous if not used properly. Therefore, the Conservation District conducted another in a series of workshops on February 16, 2022, to show landowners the proper ways to conduct and maintain a burn. Participants were taught by SC Forester Ron Holt the proper pre-burn preparations including how to make a burn plan and how to notify the SC Forestry Commission of a burn. The attendees were taught about the effects of the weather and how to do a test fire. Liability issues were discussed as well as how to get assistance. Different burning techniques were conducted to show the attendees different ways to burn. They were then allowed to take part in a burn by using the drip torch and securing the burn while under close supervision of the Forestry Commission. A demonstration was also done on burning uphill and downhill to show the vast difference in the burns. A successful burn was conducted and those in attendance gained a lot of useful information.









Camp Wildwood

Camp Wildwood is a high energy hands on outdoor environmental camp. It is a fun filled week in which students can experience many aspects of their natural environment. They discover that we are a part of nature and everything we do in some way affects the natural balance. The campers acquire the knowledge and appreciation needed for the protection and wise use of our natural resources. They learn self-reliance, self-discipline and independence while in an outdoor setting. It helps them to build self confidence in relationships and learn how to cooperate within a group. They learn about the diversity or our natural resources and how many career choices there are in that field. WA student Billy Godwin was sponsored to attend in 2022. Billy said it was "a week to remember" and he enjoyed learning about gun safety, fish biology, forestry, and wildlife management. He enjoyed skeet shooting and shooting competitions.







Williamsburg Conservation Update

Camp Long

Located in Aiken, SC Camp Long is a 4H Camp that offers a variety of camping programs. Four H began in the early 1900s through the USDA to train and educate young people in the



best techniques available for success in agricultrue. Today the 4H youth development programs use a learn by doing approach

empower youth become healthy, to productive, and caring members of society. 4H Camps teach through activities such as a climbing tower, archery, canoeing, and sports.

Anna Grace Godwin attended Camp Long in the summer of 2022. She is a rising 6th grade student at Williamsburg Academy.



Poster Contest

Our educational programs reach from kindergarten to the 12th grade. For the younger students, the District offers a Poster Contest. The elementary students enjoy



learning



about the topic which was Healthy Soil: Healthy Life this year. Then they get a chance to bring the topic to life on their

posters. The winning classes in 2022 were Ms. Scott's first grade class at Anderson Primary School, Ms. Sheela and Mrs. Fulton's classes at Hemingway Middle



Partnership Conference

School.

Each year the SC Association of Conservation Districts hosts a Partnership Conference for all District Commissioners. The conference is held in conjunction with the SC Department of Natural Resources



and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. All three agencies can get updates from their partners, share ideas, and present new program information. Chairman Frances McClary and District Coordinator Denise Smith attended the conference to get program information and updates. In 2022 the conference guest speakers were the Peterson Farm Brothers. The brothers

farm together and produce entertaining and educational videos on YouTube. They post farming and video updates. They felt the need to correct the many misconceptions about modern day farmers,

so they speak to crowds and produce informative videos. They also blog about misunderstood topics in agriculture and give tours of their farm in Kansas. Their goal is to educate the general public on where their food comes from and what a real farm family is like. You can view their website and watch their videos at https://petersonfarmbrothers.com/about-us/



Essay Contest

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District held its annual essay contest for students in Williamsburg County. The purpose of the contest is to help youth learn about our natural resources and ways they can help protect them. In 2022, the topic of the contest was "Healthy Soil: Healthy Life". The students' essays investigated what makes the soil healthy and the ways we depend on it.

The contest winner s were: 4th Grade Winner – Raeshaun Graham and 2nd Place - Chayce Parson. Honorable Mention went to Frederick Fulton, all of Greeleyville Elementary School. The 5th Grade Winner – Paige Kellahan from Williamsburg Academy and 2nd Place – Gabriella Worrell from Kenneth Gardner Elementary

County Winner

Sharon Lian

School. The 7th Grade Winner – Shay Carraway from Williamsburg Academy. The 8th Grade Winner - Sharon Lian - and 2nd Place - Abigail Wikes both from Williamsburg Academy. From the grade winners, a County Winner is chosen who presented the best overall essay. The County Winner for 2022 was Sharon Lian.















Raeshaun Graham Chayce Parson

Frederick Fulton

Paige Kellahan

Gabriella Worrell Shay Carraway

Abigail Wiles

Photography Contest

Each year the Williamsburg Conservation District holds a photography contest for the county students in grades 9 -12. The objective is to get the youth outside in nature where they can learn to appreciate the abundance of natural resources in Williamsburg County with which we have been blessed. This appreciation may help them to decide on their career choices and give them a desire to protect our natural resources. The first-place winner for 2022 was Gracie Graham at Williamsburg Academy and second place was Tammala Lasane of Kingstree Senior High School.









Tammala Lasane Gracie Graham

Book of the Month

Book of the Month is a program sponsored by the SC Farm Bureau Women's Committee. It is a literacy outreach program with ag-related resources to utilize in the classroom. Every month, a new book is available with accompanying activities that are aligned with SC State Standards. The Williamsburg Conservation District is pleased to sponsor school libraries in the county to receive the informative and ag-educational books making them available to all students at the schools. The Williamsburg Academy and Kenneth Gardner Elementary School libraries were sponsored by the Williamsburg Conservation



District in 2022 to participate in the learning program.

Keep Williamsburg Beautiful

Keep Williamsburg Beautiful is the local affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. It is



supported by grant funds from Keep South Carolina Beautiful. These funds are used to support litter cleanups throughout the year. They provide reachers,

gloves vests and bags for local clean up efforts. They address the litter issue through positive environmental, social, and financial impacts.



In 2022 the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District was

asked to take sponsorship of the group. During the year 45,800 pounds of litter and

trash was picked up by group volunteers.



Pee Dee Area Meeting

The Williamsburg District hosted the 2022 Pee Dee Area Meeting on October 11, 2022. Guest speaker Louis Drucker gave a presentation of the new state park being established. The Black River is the park with stops along the river which will include environmental stations, education centers, bike paths, walking trails, kayak inputs and more. He gave an overview of the project from the beginning and what it will look like when finished. Garrett Howard, the FFA advisor at Carver's Bay High School, spoke and FFA leader Sara Emilee Goude gave a report on the



group's success and accomplishments. Several members of the FFA were in attendance. Speakers included the Pee Dee Area Director Justin Woodard, SC DNR Conservation Districts Program Manager Tyler Brown, DNR Cimatologist Elliott Wickham and NRCS State Conservationist Ann English and Area Director Reginald Liddell.



New District Conservationist

The Williamsburg NRCS office has a new DC, Jeremy Munn, who grew up in Niceville, FL., on his grandpa's homestead. Later he served in the Navy as a structural and hydraulic mechanic for F/A-18's stationed on several carriers during Operation Enduring Freedom. After his time in the Navy, Jeremy earned a B.A in Elementary Education, a B.S in Forestry: Natural Resourse Management from the University of Florida and M.S in Environmental Policy and Law with a concentration in Environmental Planning and Design. Jeremy started with the NRCS in 2018 in Iowa Park, TX., as a Conservation Planner helping producers in ranching, for both range and pastureland; and cropland comprised of cotton, peanuts, and corn. During his time in Texas, he also served on the Civil Rights committee as the Veteran's Civil Rights Program Manager and on the NRCS Field Advisory Committee. In 2021, Jeremy accepted District Conservationist position Marlboro, SC., helping producers in Forestry,

and cropland comprised of cotton, corn, soybeans, and small farmsteads growing specialty crops.



Jeremy begins his chapter the next New District as Conservationist for Williamsburg, SC. He is acompanied by his wife and two rambunctious boys, ages 2 and 13. Jeremy also brings his love for agriculture and the environment, as well as an understanding that producers have a difficult road ahead with rising prices from inflation and fluctuating markets. His hope is to help to reduce the cost of inputs burdening our producers while helping to improve the land for their family's legacy and the community.

Arbor Day

Arbor Day was observed by the District the first week of December. Two hundred fifty-three fifth-grade students in the county were given an eastern redbud tree to take home and plant. Partnering with the SC Forestry Commission, the WSWCD provided the trees, and each school received a presentation from Forester GraceAnna Cooper. She taught the students how to plant their tree, what trees need to survive, what useful products we get from trees and about forest fires. They enjoyed a fun activity which taught them about thinning trees and disease prevention.





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. Anyone with conservation or program concerns and questions may contact the district at 843-354-9621 ext. 3. You may also visit the District's www.williamsburgswcd.com. website Conservation District Commissioners charged with promoting the wise use of soil and water within their Conservation District. provide Conservation Districts customer service to local landowners, conservation related education and outreach opportunities, and serve as conservation advocates for the community. Conservation Districts are the voice for locally led conservation!



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. These practices 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 is being implemented over a five- year period.

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 2022, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 7 new contracts totaling \$66,771.00 on 345 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 2022, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 59 new contracts totaling \$3,028,863.55 on 28,798.2 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.

2022 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. They enabled the District to send four students to camp in 2022.

CAMP FUND CONTRIBUTORS

Worldnet Auctions

Langmo Williamsburg Lands, LLC

Charles Ingram Lumber Co.

DSM Nutritional Products

PLATINUM

Mishoe Insurance Agency
Farmers Telephone Company
Wake Stone Corporation
McElveen Buick GMC Inc.
Longlands Plantation
Palmetto Synthetics
Wm. Co. Farm Bureau
Carsten Farms
Grier Farms LLC

GOLD

Cooper's Country Store
Santee Cooper
Anderson Brothers Bank
S2 Farms LLC
Bank of Greeleyville
The Citizens Bank
First Citizens Bank
Harry McKenzie Jr.

SILVER

Charles R. Barwick
Archie B Ward
Never Fail Farm

REGULAR

Ruth Brown
Richard A Gamble



Our Year in Pictures































Our Mission Statement:

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



Board Of Commissioners

Frances McClary – Chairman

Scott Williamson – Vice Chairman

Ruth Brown – Secretary/ Treasurer

Brian McClam

Atwood McIntosh

Associate Commissioners
GraceAnna Cooper
Craig McFadden

Commissioners Emeritus

Richard A. Gamble

Jayne Carsten



Our Staff

Denise Smith - District Coordinator

Jeremy Munn - District Conservationist

Anthony Parson - Soil Conservation Technician

Bradley Stokes - Soil Conservationist

Conservation is a cause that has no end. There is no point at which we will say our work is finished. Rachel Carson