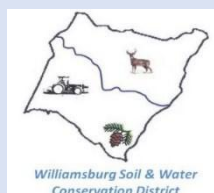




*The Williamsburg Soil and Water
Conservation District*

Williamsburg Conservation Update Annual Report 2025

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.



www.williamsburgswcd.com

Poster Contest

The winner of the annual poster contest was Mrs. Burks's third grade class at Williamsburg Academy. The class submitted a great poster showcasing the topic "Home is where the Habitat is". The students learned about the many habitats in South Carolina and their inhabitants. Mrs. Burks said the group worked diligently on their poster even during recesses and breaks. The class celebrated with a pizza party supplied by the District.



Banquet Awards

Held annually, the Williamsburg HomeTown Chamber Banquet is an event to recognize citizens for their community involvement. The Conservation District and Keep Williamsburg Beautiful work together to combat the litter problem in the county. At the banquet, awards were given to two individuals to recognize their hard work to reduce litter in the area. Lane Mayor, Charlie Fulton, was presented with the Iron Eyes Cody Award from Keep Williamsburg Beautiful Chairman, Robert Jolly. Then Betsy Yegar received the Lady Bird Johnson Award from board member Leslee Spivey. If we all work together to reduce litter and beautify our surroundings, it will encourage others to do the same.



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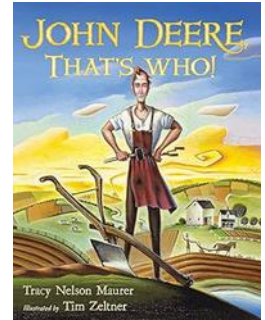
SC Wildlife Magazine



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. This year the District donated the magazine to the school libraries at Kingstree High School, Hemingway High School, Hemingway Day School and Williamsburg Academy. The students love looking at the magazine and reading the stories.

Sprouts' Monthly Book

Sprout's Monthly Book 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. Williamsburg Academy, Hemingway Elementary, and CE Murray Middle Schools were sponsored in 2025 to participate in the learning program.



Soil Health



95% of food production relies on the soil. Healthy soil is vital to our existence, but we are losing it faster than it is formed. Maintaining healthy soil is crucial for food production. You can visit the NRCS website at this link to view informative soil health fact sheets. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/guides-and-instructions/soil-health-fact-sheets>

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 website at www.williamsburgswcd.com. Conservation District Commissioners are charged with promoting the wise use of soil and water within their Conservation District. Conservation Districts provide 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! The Board added new Associate Commissioners to assist with their activities. The new Associate Commissioners are Shane Stuekey, Craig McFadden, Al Langmo, and Fred Tisdale.

Presidents Circle



Each year Palmetto Pride recognizes the affiliates who have achieved their standards of excellence during the year. At the 2025 Litter Summit Keep Williamsburg Beautiful was honored to receive the Presidents Circle Award. Their activities during the year included litter cleanups, river cleanups, educational contests, awards to outstanding individuals, and providing cleanup tools to the groups and individuals who were holding cleanup events.

Camp Wildwood

Do you know a student who loves the outdoors and would like to spend a week learning about nature and participating in many exciting activities? If you do tell them to apply for a week of adventure at Camp Wildwood. The weeklong camp is held at King's Mountain State Park in June. 10th – 12th grade students may apply online at <https://www.campwildwoodsc.com/> If accepted the Williamsburg Conservation District will assist with the camper's tuition.

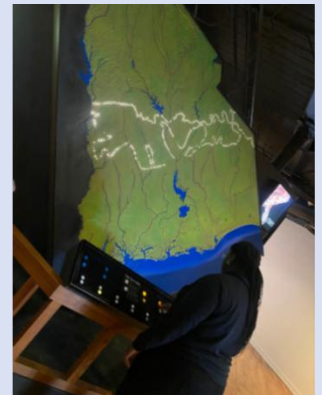


Williamsburg Conservation Update

Teacher's Class Award

Each year the Conservation District offers teachers the chance to apply for funds to assist with conservation education in their classroom. The winner of the award in 2025 was Ms. Shywana Thomas of Hemingway MB Lee Middle School. Ms. Thomas chose to take her class to the SC State Museum where they could learn and explore history and science. The 6th grade class of 30 visited the museum on May 23, 2025. Ms. Thomas commented, "They came in contact with many of the things they learned this school year, including aspects of Earth science, like fossils and geologic time. They also had the opportunity to see some things they had never seen, like the actual sizes of ancient organisms and different artifacts of history. The greatest part for most was the planetarium show where they learned about habitats on Earth. It taught them about how many species, aside from humans, are connected by Earth's resources and how we can conserve those limited resources given to us by our habitat."

In addition, they enjoyed the alternative setting for learning history and science; while also recognizing things they had learned in the past. Here are a few photos that capture some of the moments from the trip.



Senior Award

The District offers a Senior Conservation Achievement Award each year to graduates to assist them with their college expenses. The award is for students with an interest in one of the many fields of conservation. The students are required to have practiced basic conservation while in high school and/or be planning to enter a Natural Resource, Agriculture or Conservation field of study in college. In 2025 two students were presented with the award. Billy Williamson and William Caulder, both students at Williamsburg Academy. William will attend Clemson University to study forestry as he wants to preserve the outdoors for future generations. Billy will attend Florence Darlington Technical College to pursue engineering and use his skills to take care of the land. Both students have been active in high school and community functions.

Partnership Conference

The SCACD 2025 conference was a huge success with 240 attending the event. The keynote speaker, Rich Duesterhaus of NACD gave a history of conservation districts. The Honorable Governor Henry McMaster addressed the group about current topics. Ken Roper, the Pickens County Administrator spoke about engaging your county. Breakout Sessions gave a variety of topics including outreach opportunities, Local workgroup meetings, grant opportunities, stewardship week, adopt-a-stream and more. The evening culminated with an awards dinner. The following day District Sharing Ideas were presented, Area Caucus Meetings held and the SCACD Business meeting was held where policy positions were adopted. The conference provided useful and informative material for all in attendance.



Pollinator Week



Pollinator Week is an annual celebration of the vital role that pollinators play in our ecosystems, economies, and agriculture. The 2025 theme, "Pollinators Weave Connections," urged us to appreciate the essential role pollinators play in creating and expressing human culture. These essential creatures, including bees, butterflies, moths, bats, beetles, and hummingbirds, are the unsung heroes behind the food we enjoy and the beauty that surrounds us. As we reflect on the interconnectedness of our world, let's unite in a collective effort to protect and preserve pollinators. By

understanding the impact of our actions on their habitats and embracing effective and ethical agricultural practices, we can pave the way for a flourishing future. Let's cultivate a world where both nature and humanity thrive in harmony. You can go to the link below to explore resources and learn about pollinator-friendly initiatives.

<https://www.usda.gov/farming-and-ranching/plants-and-crops/plant-breeding/pollinators>

Grain Drill

The Williamsburg SWCD purchased a Great Plains 6' grain drill and caddy. The drill will be rented for a daily fee of \$200. Renters must sign a contract and pay before using the drill. No till drills allow farmers to plant crops without having to plow the land which saves time and reduces the need for fertilizer. It also reduces the amount of runoff into waterways, improving water quality. The district is excited to provide this service to the producers and landowners in Williamsburg County.



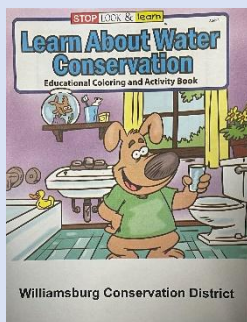
Envirothon

The Envirothon is a program for high school students to learn more about the environment. It tests the student's knowledge on topics such as soils, water resources, forestry, wildlife, and current environmental issues. It is a unique approach to environmental education. Teams of five from high schools compete in an outdoor setting where they learn that cooperation is needed to achieve success. Participation is great fun and they become more environmentally aware, action-oriented adults. The Williamsburg Conservation District will sponsor a team to attend the event.



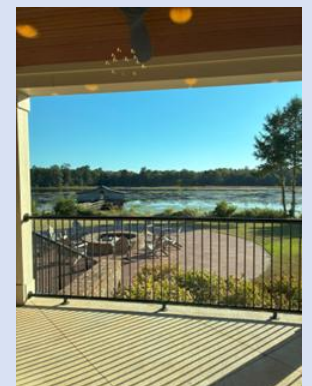
Earth Day

While it began in the United States, Earth Day is now celebrated in more than 192 countries. Earth Day is a good time for individuals and workplaces to think about their impact on the environment. Leaders can consider the footprint of their organization and whether these are ways – big or small – to operate more sustainably. Let these ideas inspire you for Earth Day. The Williamsburg Conservation District believes that teaching our children how to protect our environment is an important task. The third-grade students at Hemingway Elementary School and Hemingway Day School were given the Learn About Water Conservation coloring books to help them learn important conservation activities. The book includes 16 pages of fun coloring, work searches, mazes, and puzzles to help the students learn about protecting and conserving water. There is only so much water on this wonderful planet, and we must do all we can to protect it.



Pee Dee Area Meeting

The Sumter Soil and Water Conservation District was the host for the Pee Dee Area Meeting in 2025. It was held at the Shaw Welcome Center in Dalzell. A brief tour of the agricultural grounds was given highlighting the history of the property. The working farm actively manages timber harvesting operations. The 900-acre property is adjacent to the Shaw Air Force Base and holds forests, ponds and fields. It was purchased by the county for security purposes to protect the land around Shaw Air Force Base. The meeting was informative with reports from the Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Department of Environmental Services, Local Workgroup Discussion and an Envirothon Report. The evening culminated with a meal and a drawing for door prizes.



Essay Contest

The essay contest topic this year was “Home is where the Habitat is”. A habitat provides the essentials that plants and animals need to survive, like food, water, shelter, and space. Protecting habitats helps to maintain healthy ecosystems. The winners were: 4th grade – Paige Fulton and 2nd place Ricco Washington Jr. 5th grade – Tyler McClorin all students at Kenneth Gardner Leadership Academy. 8th grade – Kelise Gregory at CE Murray. The overall county winner was Kelise Gregory.



Paige Fulton, Ricco Washington Jr., Tyler McClorin



Teacher Dr. Andrea McCray, District Coordinator Denise Smith, Kelise Gregory and Principal Jonathan Chandler.

Photography Contest

The annual Photography Contest is a great way to get students outside and exploring nature. The Williamsburg Conservation District holds the contest each year for high school students. The 2025 winner was Imani Boggon, a student at Kingstree High School. Her photo of a beautiful sunset placed first earning her a \$50 award. The students may enter in any of four categories which are: Landscapes, Rural Life, Trees, and Native Wildlife.



Imani Boggon is presented with her award by District Employee Denise Smith and Principal Mark Fraiser.

Keep Williamsburg Beautiful

The Williamsburg Conservation District has partnered with Keep Williamsburg Beautiful to help conduct their activities and programs in the county. Below are some of their accomplishments.

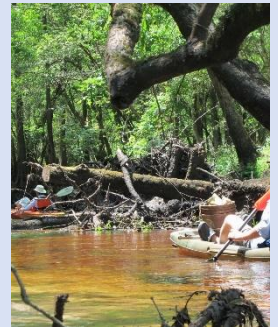
Great American Cleanup

The Williamsburg Conservation District and Keep Williamsburg Beautiful work together to promote litter awareness in the county. On April 26 the groups got together to sponsor a litter cleanup. Volunteers cleared a stretch of Highway 52 near town. They picked up 21 bags of debris, including a tire, 2 X 4s, metal car parts and refrigerator parts.



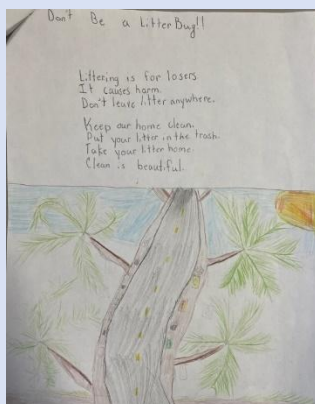
Black River Cleanup

As part of the Great American Cleanup, on May 17 volunteers in kayaks, canoes and johnboats converged at the Mill Street Landing in Kingstree to clear trash and debris out of Black River. The volunteers came from many organizations including the Lions Club, SC Waterfowl Association, Keep Williamsburg Beautiful, Black Scenic River Advisory Council and numerous paddling clubs. The group collected 87 bags of trash, 4 tires, 5 buckets, 4 pieces of lumber, 4 air mattresses and 2 chairs.



Art Contest

An art contest for high school students was held to get the students involved in aesthetically improving our community's environment by creating cleaner public spaces and streetscapes through litter removal and elimination, improving efforts to recycle, and introducing natural plantings to enhance our neighborhoods. The winners were: 1st Place – Kinsley Burns of Williamsburg Academy, 2nd Place – Kayron Pechu of Greeleyville STEAM Academy, 3rd Place – Castianna Byno of Greeleyville STEAM Academy.





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 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. In 2025 the NRCS office helped 197 producers.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

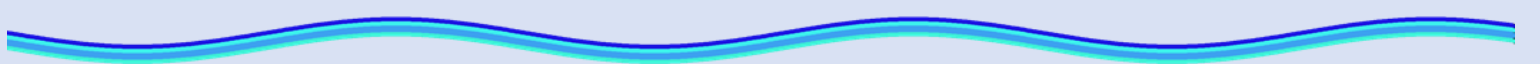
The Environmental Quality Incentives Program provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, NRCS develops contracts with agricultural producers to implement conservation practices to address natural resource problems such as watering systems for livestock, conservation tillage, seasonal high tunnels and many other practices. In 2025, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 15 new contracts totaling \$403,775 on 2,419 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 2025, NRCS in Williamsburg County awarded 10 new contracts totaling \$1,390,034 on 12,509 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.

Williamsburg Producer Highlight *Maribritt Philipp of Crafty Maribritt LLC*



In the heart of Lake City, South Carolina, Maribritt Philipp transformed her property into a thriving niche operation focused on natural wellness and sustainable agriculture. Through a partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Maribritt received crucial funding to install a micro irrigation system and a high tunnel which is a seasonal tunnel system to extend the growing season, protect crops from extreme weather, and support soil health and efficient resource use.

With the high tunnel in place, Maribritt has expanded her cultivation of key ingredients, like American elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), ginger, and turmeric. These plants form the foundation of her holistic medicine offerings, which emphasize natural immune support, anti-inflammatory benefits, and overall wellness. A cornerstone of Crafty Maribritt LLC is its own apiary which produces local raw honey that Maribritt sells directly to the community.



Maribritt's operation goes beyond sales – she prioritizes education and community connection. Visitors enjoy farm tours, learning about elderberries, beekeeping, small-scale homesteading, and participating in workshops on herbal plants, harvesting, and creating personal wellness products.



This success story highlights how NRCS's assistance can empower local producers to build resilient, community-focused businesses. By supporting the installation of the high tunnel and micro irrigation system, NRCS helped Maribritt extend her growing capabilities, diversify her niche in holistic health products and strengthen local food systems with naturally grown goods. Today Crafty Maribritt LLC stands as a shining example of sustainable farming in Williamsburg County, SC.

Our Mission Statement:

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



Board Of Commissioners

Atwood McIntosh

Brian McClam

Ruth Brown – Sec./Treas.

Scott Williamson – Vice Chairman

Frances McClary – Chairman

Associate Commissioners

Craig McFadden

Al Langmo

Shane Stuckey

Fred Tisdale

Commissioner

Emeritus

Jayne Carsten

Staff

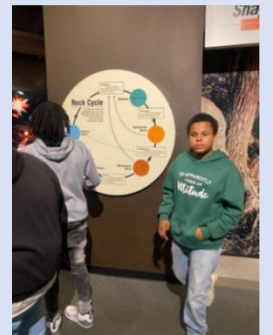
Denise Smith - District Coordinator

Jeremy Munn - District Conservationist

Laila Wright - Soil Conservationist

Billy Godwin - District Intern

Mac Brown – Soil Technician



2025 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

Worldnet Auctions Live LLC

Charles Ingram Lumber Co.

Langmo Williamsburg Lands LLC

DSM Nutritional Products

PLATINUM

Farmers Telephone Coop.

Palmetto Synthetics, LLC

The Citizens Bank

Jayne Carsten

Williamsburg County

Farm Bureau

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GOLD

Cooper's Country

Store

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Bank

Santee Cooper

McElveen Buick GMC

S2 Farms LLC

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SILVER

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Never Fail Farm

REGULAR

