

Williamsburg Conservation Update

Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District

2014 Annual Report

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Soil Conservation Tech.

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



The L. Claude McClary Conservation Achievement Award



Percy Lawrimore Farms

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District's L. Claude McClary Conservation Achievement award for 2014 was presented to Percy Lawrimore Farms.

Percy Lawrimore Farms is being recognized for their adoption of conservation tillage (no-till) and cover crops after over 80 years of farming conventionally.

When implementing conservation tillage, you plant crops in a previous crop's residue. Year round cover helps reduce runoff, erosion and weed germination. Conservation tillage improves soil quality, saves fuel, require less labor and increases soil organic matter.

Cover crops temporarily protect the land until the main crop is planted. Grasses, legumes, or small grains are planted to protect the soil from erosion during the winter months. Cover crops add organic matter to the soils. Cover crops also conserve moisture and keep weeds down which saves money.

Percy Lawrimore Farms consists of Percy Lawrimore Jr., W.A. Lawrimore and W.A. Lawrimore (Andy) Jr.

When Mr. Percy Lawrimore passed in 1969, his sons Percy Lawrimore and W.A. Lawrimore decided to continue the legacy of farming making them the 4th generation of farmers. They started out planting tobacco, corn, cotton and soybeans. They also raised cattle and hogs. Now the operation, which includes W.A. Larimore, Jr (Andy), the 5th generation, consists of corn, cotton, soybeans and wheat.

The Lawrimore's live and farm in the Muddy Creek community of Williamsburg County.



Aim-At-Ag



The Conservation District sponsored Lane Phillips to attend the Aim-At-Ag Sporting Clays Tournament held November 15, 2014 at Black River Sporting Clays. The competition was a benefit for the 4H and FFA of South Carolina. Participants got to shoot at 100 rounds of sporting clays. They learned responsible gun handling and safety while enjoying a fun sport. Skeet shooting also teaches how to gauge distances. Lane placed first in his age division in the competition.



FFA Competition



In February, the District helped sponsor the FFA 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 30 high schools in South Carolina competed for the title of State Champion. Students earned the opportunity to demonstrate their technical and management skills as related to wildlife, habitat and harvesting regulations. Their knowledge was tested through a written exam, plant, animal, and equipment identification stations, and a team activity related to wildlife.

Essay Contest

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District held the annual Essay Contest in 2014. The contest was open to all students in the fourth through eighth grades. The topic of the contest was “Dig Deeper – Mysteries in the Soil”. The students’ essays investigated what is in our soil and the benefits we get from the soil. They researched what it tells us about the past and the soil’s importance in our daily lives. Soil is called the “skin of the earth” and like our own skin, we can’t live without soil. The winners of this year’s competition receiving a certificate and cash prize were (left to right):



Joey Ferland, Rivers Stuckey & Juan Arrellano,



Le’Ron Pressley



Teacher: Tracey Stuckey of Hem. Day School

Soil Stewardship Week

Soil is an amazing substance. It is a complex mix of minerals, air, and water. Soil also teams with countless micro-organisms, and the decaying remains of once-living things. Soil is made of life and soil makes life.

To the farmer, soil is where crops grow.

To the engineer, soil is a foundation upon which to build.

To the ecologist, soil supports communities of living things.

To the archaeologist, soil holds clues to past cultures.

To the city dweller, soil nurtures grass and gardens.

To the soil scientist, soil is all of these things.

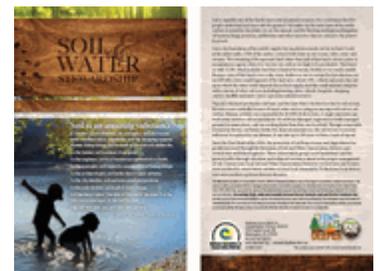
Soil has been called “the skin of the earth” because it is the thing outermost layer of the Earth’s crust.

Like our own skin, we can’t live without soil.

Soil is arguably one of the Earth’s most critical natural resources. It is a substance that few people understand and most take for granted. It nourishes the plants we eat, the animals and the thriving underground kingdom of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, earthworms and other microbes that are critical to the planet’s food web.

Since the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, the protection of soil from erosion and degradation has greatly increased through the formation of Soil and Water conservation Districts and several state and federal agencies. These conservation groups assist landowners and the general public through education and technical assistance aimed at the proper management of soil.

The commissioners distributed soil stewardship flyers in observance of Soil Stewardship Week April 27 –May 4.



Firefly Project



The Clemson Vanishing Firefly Project is conducted by volunteers who are elementary students to seniors that agree to take a minute each night from May 31 to August 31 between the hours of 8 and 10 pm to count the fireflies they see. The observers then report their



findings either on a mobile app or with an online form. Fireflies are reliable indicators of environmental health because their population density is correlated to the availability of healthy habitats. They are threatened by many factors including pesticides and chemicals, pollution, habitat changes, forest management, drought and bright light from cities and homes. If you would like to become a citizen scientist and help with the counts, visit http://www.clemson.edu/public/rec/baruch/firefly_project/ for information on the project.

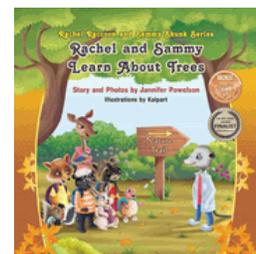
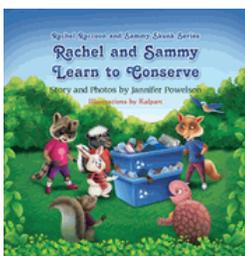
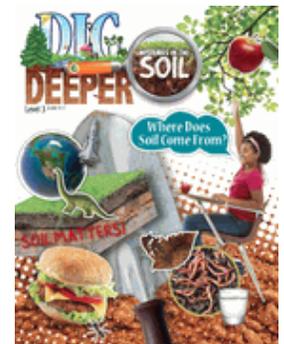
Firefly as Ecosystem Indicators – An environmental indicator is used to communicate information about ecosystems and the impacts of human activity to groups such as the public or government policy makers. The indicator can reflect a variety of aspects of ecosystems, including biological, chemical, and physical characteristics. The researchers at Clemson University are studying the firefly as environmental indicator for coastal South Carolina. The unique bioluminescence property of fireflies provides visual clues of environmental quality and is easy to measure and quantify by the general public.

Earth Day

In an effort to help educate local students, the Conservation District provided fun and educational material to fourth and fifth grade students and to the Williamsburg County Library for Earth Day, which is celebrated on April 22. The soils activity booklets help them to recognize that millions of organisms are living in the soil around them and to appreciate the benefits of soil and soil organisms to humans. They also help to identify the structure and function of soil horizons. They assisted the students in investigating a soil survey map, to determine local soil types and to comprehend the factors involved in soil formation.

These activity booklets were given to the fourth & fifth grade students of Mrs. McCullough, a teacher at Williamsburg Academy, who worked them into her lesson plan on soil and made them part of her science curriculum. Mrs. McCullough said “they are really fun and interesting”. She was also given 100 bookmarks for the students with the topic of soil and its importance.

Two of the books in the *Rachel Raccoon and Sammy Skunk* series were donated to the Williamsburg County Library. The library was also given 100 bookmarks with information about the importance of soil.



In *Rachel and Sammy Learn to Conserve*, the fourth book in the series, Rachel, Sammy, and their classmates help children discover that everyone wins when they conserve the earth.

Rachel and Sammy Learn About Trees is the third book in the Rachel and Sammy Series. Rachel and Sammy, along with their classmates, teacher, Mrs. Doe, and Doc Opossum, take a field trip to the forest, where they discover interesting tree facts. This book will help children learn about tree identification, parts of trees, photosynthesis, and much more!

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 theme was “Dig Deeper – Mysteries in the Soil”. The 2014 winners were: Kindergarten - Mrs. Leslie Harrell's Class at Hemingway Day School, First Grade - Mrs. Leslie Harrell's Class at Hemingway Day School, Third Grade Ms. Crystal Mercer's Class at Williamsburg Academy and Ms. Marti Powell's Class at Hemingway Day School.



Teacher's Class Award

Each year, the Conservation District offers sixth grade teachers the chance to apply for a \$250 cash award to be used for a class project. This year two teachers were awarded the prize. Ms. Tracey Stuckey of Hemingway Day School received it for her Seeds to Shoreline project in which the students learned the importance of natural buffers and critical habitats. They planted and harvested *Spartina alterniflora* to plant at Huntington Beach State Park and built rain barrels to aid with water conservation. Ms. Katherine Brown of Kingstree Middle School also received the award for her sixth grade class's composting project. These students learned what is decomposable and were responsible for collecting their organic wastes in the lunchroom and transporting them to the composting bin. They got to see how their trash could be turned into a valuable product.



Senior Conservation Achievement Award

Briley Steele was selected to receive the Senior Conservation Achievement Award of the Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District for 2014. Briley was a senior at Williamsburg Academy. He began classes at USC in the fall of 2014 to study Civil/Environmental Engineering. He would like to pursue a career that promotes environmental safety and preservation. He would like to help figure out ways to use and recycle the natural resources that we have. Since Briley was eleven years old he began planting, harvesting and selling produce. By age fourteen he and a friend, partnered together to start their own business called “Wee Gru It”. They used conservation practices including compost, drip irrigation and no pesticides to grow vegetables. They harvested and delivered the produce to their customers.

Briley was very active in sports during his high school career. He has participated in baseball, football and basketball while still finding time for hunting and fishing. He spent many hours exploring organic gardening and working at Williamsburg Organic's composting business. Briley said his parents taught him “the value of earning what is mine and how to appreciate the gifts we receive along the way”. He used the \$500 award to help with the cost of his education.



Growing Agriculture Meeting

On July 8, 2014, Conservation District Board Members and staff met with Williamsburg County School Superintendent Dr. Jefferson-Barnes in a Growing Agriculture meeting to promote agricultural education in Williamsburg County. Along with the State Director of Agriculture, Mr. Billy Keels and other representatives in the agriculture fields, the need for an FFA program in the county was presented. The meeting resulted in the support of the School Board to form an FFA in the county high schools.

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 and Plants, Native Wildlife, Landscapes, or Rural Life. The 2014 winners were Madison Phillips and Will Timmons.

SC Conservation Partnership Conference

On February 25 and 26, 2014 the South Carolina Conservation Partnership Conference was held in Columbia. Commissioner Frances McClary and District Employee Denise Smith attended. The topic of the 2014 Conference was “Conservationists and SC’s Sustainable Future”. Speakers included Steve Hein, the Director at the Center for Wildlife Education at Georgia Southern University, Sterling Sadler – President of the SCACD, Jennifer Majors -the Supervisor at the Environmental Discovery Center at Lynches River Park, Gene Kodama - the State Forester with the SC Forestry Commission and Dennis Bauknight,-a forest Landowner in Pickens County, Ken Rentiers - DNR Deputy Director, Scott Harder Hydrologist with SCDNR, Buz Kloot – Research Associate Professor at USC and Amy Overstreet – NRCS Outreach Coordinator. Area caucus meetings were held as well as a silent auction to raise funds for the District Employees Association. The commissioners also attended a Legislative Appreciation Dinner to meet with their local representatives and show appreciation for their legislator’s commitment and efforts to further conservation in the state.

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 2014 the board met with County Councilwoman Jeanie Brown-Burroughs concerning recycling in the county. They also met with Larry Gay from ICE Recycling to gain information on how Williamsburg County can recycle more. They met with 4H agent Jolie Brown and NRCS State Conservationist Ann English, Assistant State Conservationist, Dennis Mobley, and Ken Sales from the Williamsburg Economic Development Board.

The Board has added new Associate Commissioners Ruth Brown and Jolie Brown. Commissioners At McIntosh and Scott Williamson were elected for new terms of office in 2014 and Vice-Chairman Jayne Carsten was re-appointed for another 4 year term of office by the Department of Natural Resources.

Did you know?

Today's American farmer feeds about 155 people worldwide. In 1960, that number was 25.8.

The average person consumes 584 pounds of dairy products a year.

Agriculture is the nation’s largest employer.

One bushel of corn can sweeten 400 cans of pop.

2014 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

Tri-County Cotton Growers, LLC

PLATINUM

Wake Stone Corporation
Longland Plantation
Farmers Telephone Cooperative
The Citizens Bank
Carsten Farms
Williamsburg County Farm
Bureau

GOLD

Scotswood Plantation
Pepsi-Cola of Florence, LLC
Santee Cooper
Anderson Brothers Bank
Palmetto Synthetics, LLC
Yancey McGill
Williamsburg County
Development Board
George C. Avent

SILVER

H. E. Hemingway
Irwin McIntosh Farms, Inc.
Never Fail Farm
World Net Auctions, Inc.

REGULAR

Bestway
Steve Squires
Archie Ward
Charles R. Barwick
John Snow
Sammy Squires

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