



Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District

Annual Report 2012~2013



531 Robertson Blvd, Suite B, Walterboro, SC

August 2013

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Natural Resources Conservation Service
Fred Tritapoe, District Conservationist
Eddie Mitchell, Soil Conservation Tech.

The Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District takes pride in presenting the 2012-2013 Annual Report. The activities of the conservation district are governed by a five-member board of commissioners, two are appointed by the state, and three are elected in the general election. The conservation district works closely with federal and state partners to provide assistance in natural resources conservation in Colleton County. The USDA-NRCS provides technical support to the district and the SC DNR provides educational support.

2012 Conservationist of the Year ~ Harry J. Tobin

Learning and applying new techniques to improve a farming operation takes motivation and a willingness to step out and test new ideas. Our 2012 Conservationist of the Year has taken the initiative to experiment with new ideas as seen in the improvements he has made on his farm in the past 3 years.

Under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Mr. Tobin completed 3 contracts where he planted 35 acres of coastal bermudagrass, installed 3962 ft. of fence to divide paddocks, installed 5576 square feet of HUAs or Heavy Use Areas, installed two 500 gal. concrete water troughs and a water well to provide clean drinking water for his livestock.

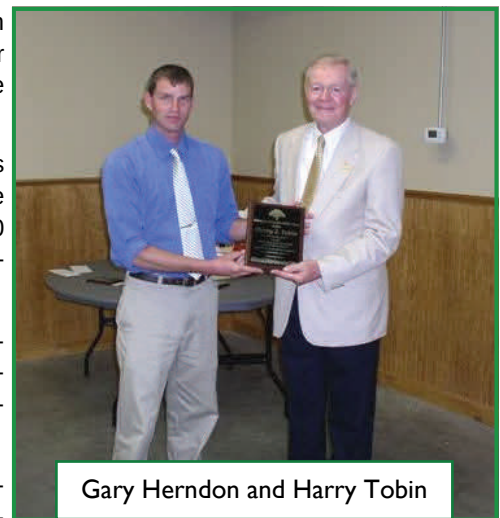
He has kept records for nutrient management on all contract acres and provided valuable information through soil testing. He has maintained an extensive grass management program through prescribed grazing by rotating his cows on a continual basis every 3-5 days during the growing season.

He started his farm with 3 Red Angus and 5 Black Angus cows. His operation has continued to grow and he now keeps 18-23 Registered Black Angus cows averaging 1200-1400 lbs. He generally experiences having a 100% calving rate. He presently has 17 calves which he will grow out to 700-800 lbs. Keeping things close to Colleton County, this producer sells all livestock to local customers.

He graduated from East Carolina University, then entered into a military career with the United States Marine Corps. He served tours within the United States, France, Japan, and Viet Nam. He retired from the Marine Corps in October 1981 after 28 years of service. Returning to the east coast, he settled in Manassas Virginia and worked with CACI for 18 years as a consultant on government contracts.

He retired in 1999 to South Carolina with his wife Jeanette, they built a house in Lodge and started working the farm in 2000. He and his wife have been married for 55 years, they have 4 children and 6 grandchildren. (5 granddaughters and 1 grandson).

Our 2012 Conservationist of the Year not only provided distinguished service to his country, but has also made his mark in the field of conservation as it relates to livestock and our natural resources. It gives us great pleasure to present the 2012 Conservationist of the Year Award to Mr. Harry Tobin.



Gary Herndon and Harry Tobin

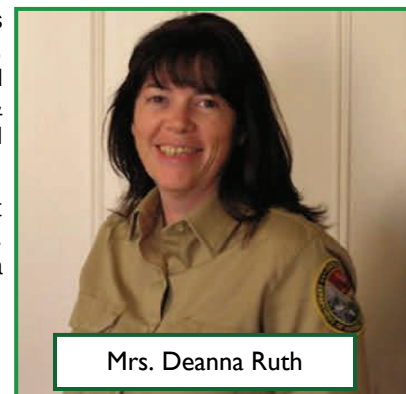
Deanna Ruth, DNR Wildlife Biologist ~ Speaker At Banquet

Mrs. Ruth began her career with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources working in the Soil & Water Conservation Section. For 5 years she worked in Allendale, Hampton, Jasper, and Beaufort counties. She then moved to Georgetown County and worked Williamsburg, Clarendon, and Sumter Counties. In 2006, she left the Soil & Water Conservation Section and joined the SC DNR Wildlife Section as the Coastal Black Bear Biologist and Heritage Preserve Manager.

As the SCDNR Coastal Bear Biologist she headed up the Black Bear Work Group that drafted the new hunt regulations for Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg counties. The coastal lands bounded by I-95 and I-26 have been identified as areas that have a significant black bear presence.

Mrs. Ruth also authored "A Homeowner's Guide: Living with Bears" which offers common-sense rules to homeowners that will help them avoid unpleasant encounters with *Ursus americanus*, the black bear. The bear brochure also details some interesting natural history information on this often-feared and frequently misunderstood wildlife species.

At the banquet, Mrs. Ruth gave an interesting and informative slide presentation on the Black Bear. She reminded everyone that the key to coexisting with bears is to understand and respect them. Black bears are usually shy, evasive and non-aggressive toward people. "Just use common sense if you encounter a bear," Ruth said. "If you move away slowly and make it aware of your presence with a calm, assertive voice, it will likely run for the nearest woods." Good advice for all of us to remember.



Mrs. Deanna Ruth



Stewardship Week April 28~May 5, 2013

"Where Does Your Water Shed?" was the theme for Stewardship Week, April 28 - May 5, 2013. The Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District celebrated this observance with area churches to highlight the importance of knowing "What is a Watershed?" A watershed is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river, or lake. Our landscape

is made up of many interconnected watersheds. Everyone lives in a watershed; we are all a part of a watershed community. We influence what happens in our watershed, good or bad, by how we treat the natural resources — soil, water, air, plants, and animals. We need to keep our watershed healthy and productive.

In observance of Stewardship Week, Rev. Gerald Mabry organized a tour of the SC Artisan Center and the Colleton Museum and Farmers Market. Both the Artisan Center and the Museum/Farmers Market celebrate nature, history, art and agriculture in our area.

In 2010, a new partnership was created to join the new Colleton Museum and Farmer's Market. Colleton County developed a multi-purpose facility that provides a home-base for the local farmers market and a dynamic new museum location celebrating the arts, culture, and history of this lowcountry community.

The Artisan Center opened its doors in 1994. In May 2000, the center was named the South Carolina's "Official Folk Art and CraftCenter". The Center promotes and highlights the vast diversity of South Carolina artisans. Every medium is represented: clay, metal, glass, wood, fiber and mixed media.

The Colleton Museum and Farmer's Market and the Artisan Center both have something for everyone! Rev. Mabry and the Conservation District also promoted the use of Stewardship resource materials in our area churches.

Annual Conservation Partnership Conference

The 72nd Annual South Carolina Conservation Partnership Conference was held in Downtown Columbia on February 26-27, 2013 at the Marriott. The topic of the conference was "Coming Together For Conservation."

This conference was designed for landowners, conservationists, farmers, natural resource professionals, and others interested in Conservation. Some of the speakers were Naturalist Rudy Mancke, State Climatologist Hope Mizzell, Wildlife Biologist Richard Morton and Mike Montebello with SC Department of Health & Environmental Control.

The conference is jointly sponsored with the SC Association of Conservation Districts, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the SC Department of Natural Resources, and Soil and Water Conservation Society.

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, marital status or handicap.

2012 ~ 2013 Earth Day Poster, Essay & Photo Contest

“Soil To Spoon...Food Gets Its Start In The Soil”

The Colleton Conservation District is proud to recognize the winners in our poster, essay, and photo contest. This year students from 9 area schools participated. We received 21 posters, 105 essays and 45 photos. The participating schools were: Black Street Early Childhood Center, Forest Hills Elementary, Bells Elementary, Northside Elementary, Colleton County Middle School, North Walterboro Christian Academy, Colleton Preparatory Academy, Teston Homeschool and Colleton County High School.

Poster Winners



The theme for our Earth Day Poster Contest was “Soil To Spoon...Food Gets Its Start In Soil”. Awards were presented to the winning classes by grade level. The participating teachers and their principals were recognized at our Annual Banquet.



Mrs. Young's 4-K Preschool class at Black Street Early Childhood Center
 Mrs. Kathy Houck's 1st Grade class at Colleton Preparatory Academy
 Mrs. Williams' 2nd Grade class at Colleton Preparatory Academy
 Mrs. Candace Martin's 3rd Grade class at North Walterboro Christian Academy
 Mrs. Hanna's 4th Grade class at North Walterboro Christian Academy
 Mrs. Shanna Ayer's 5th Grade class at Colleton Preparatory Academy



We would like to thank the principals Mrs. Martha Strickland at Black Street Early Childhood Center, Mrs. Barbara Steele at Northside Elementary, Mrs. Cindy Riley at Forest Hills Elementary, Mrs. Cordelia Jenkins at Bells Elementary, Mrs. Jennifer Bratsafolis at Colleton Preparatory Academy, and Mrs. Wydette Ackerman at North Walterboro Christian Academy for their support.

Essay Winners

photos by Fred Tritapoe

The theme for our Earth Day Essay Contest was ““Soil To Spoon...Food Gets Its Start In Soil”. A total of 105 essays were received. Awards were presented at our Annual Banquet to the following winners in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

6th Grade Winners



1st Place ~ Mollie Warren
Colleton Preparatory Academy

No Picture



2nd Place ~ Felicity Walker
N Walterboro Christian Academy



3rd Place ~ Kelsey Roberts
N Walterboro Christian Academy

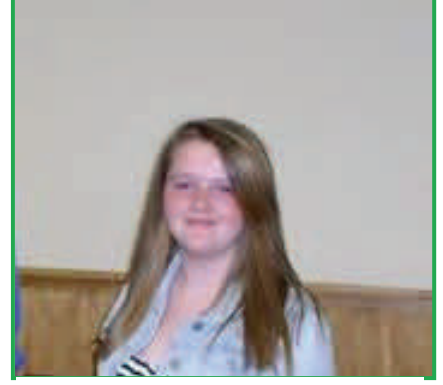
7th Grade Winners



*1st Place ~ Dana Coffin
N Walterboro Christian Academy*



*2nd Place ~ Lauren Chewning
Colleton Preparatory Academy*



*3rd Place ~ Taylor Avant
Colleton Preparatory Academy*

8th Grade Winners



*1st Place ~ Lawson Griffith
Colleton Preparatory Academy*



*2nd Place ~ Kayla Hayden
Colleton Preparatory Academy*



*3rd Place ~ Nick Padgett
Colleton Preparatory Academy*

Photography Contest Winners

The Conservation District sponsored a photography contest for students in the 9th-12th grades. The categories to choose from were native wildlife, trees/plants, landscapes or rural life. The Photo contest is an individual project for students attending Colleton County Schools. We received 45 wonderful photo entries. Awards for 1st, 2nd, 3rd Place and Honorable Mention were given out at our Annual Banquet.



*1st Place
Will Carter
"Sun Begging To Set"
Colleton Prep Academy*



Photo Winners

2nd Place
Joshua Craven
"Grandparent's Farm"
Colleton Prep Academy



3rd Place
Haydn Ray
"A Mutant In My Garden"
Colleton Prep Academy



Honorable Mention
Matt Craven
"Wildlife"
Colleton Prep Academy



Honorable Mention
Marla Strickland
"Edisto Surf"
Colleton Prep Academy



2012 ~ 2013 Affiliate Members

**denotes new members

The Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District would like to thank our affiliate members who continue to generously donate and to welcome our new members. Your support helps provide educational programs for students and the public about conserving and protecting the natural resources in Colleton County. Let's all work together to make Colleton County a better place to live and work. We are a *non-profit organization* and your contribution is *tax deductible*.

Supporting

Bank of Walterboro
Benton's Feed, Seed & Garden
Donald J. Holmes CPA
Enterprise Bank of SC
Gregory & Mary Hudson
Henry & Becky Varn **
JRM Enterprises/Fiddle's Honey**
New York Life Insurance Co.
Rhodes Oil Company, Inc. **
Rizer's Pork & Produce
Tire King
White Wood, Inc.
Williams Farms LLC

Contributing

Airy Hall Plantation
American Forestry Management
Breland Hill Farm
Carroll Management Co., Inc.
Cheeha-Combahee Plantation
Colleton County Farm Bureau
Double L Farms
Hill Tire Center
Loblolly Tree Farm, LP
Lowcountry Soil Consulting
Norris & Mary Laffitte

Benefactor

AgSouth Farm Credit, ACA
Beach Forest Management
Carolyn Godley
Coastal Electric Coop., Inc.
Hope Plantation
Joseph F. Flowers, MD
Palmetto Rural Telephone Coop.
Ruffin Farm Supply
Wood Bros. Construction

In Kind

Gladys M. Murray Flowers



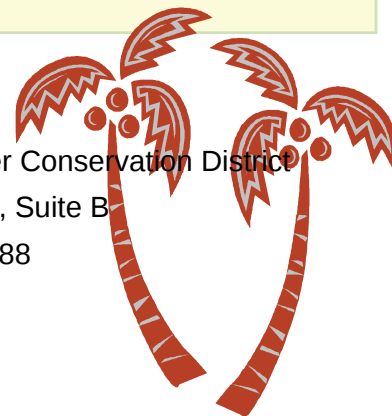
Affiliate Membership ~ 2013-2014

Please check one:

- ☐ Supporting Membership \$35.00
☐ Contributing Membership \$50.00
☐ Benefactor Membership \$100.00 +
☐ Memorial/Honorarium for _____

Mail to:

Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District
531 Robertson Blvd., Suite B
Walterboro, SC 29488



How would you like your membership listed? Individual or Company

Name _____
 Company Name _____ Company Contact Person _____
 Address _____ City _____
 State _____ Zip Code _____ Donation Enclosed _____



NRCS Natural Resources
Conservation Service

The Conservation District relies on NRCS to provide technical assistance to landowners in Colleton County. Assistance is provided with implementation of conservation practices such as wildlife management, subsurface drainage, residue management, nutrient and pest management, prescribed grazing, wetland restoration, and other technical practices, which may require engineering surveys and designs. Last year, NRCS assisted 978 customers with conservation issues concerning agriculture, forestry, livestock management, soil management, wildlife, recreation, natural resource education, and engineering. NRCS is also involved with the administration of various cost share programs such as the EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program), the CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program), the HFRP (Healthy Forests Reserve Program), and the WRP (Wetland Reserve Program). The Strikeforce Initiative was announced in March 2013. Colleton County was selected as 1 of 19 counties in South Carolina to qualify as a Strikeforce County. The initial application period produced 27 applications. In addition, NRCS provides technical assistance with the CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) and certain maintenance projects involving the Willow Swamp Watershed. NRCS personnel, upon request, can meet with producers/landowners to evaluate their resource concerns and develop conservation plans. The local NRCS Office is located at 531 Robertson Blvd., Walterboro and the phone number is 549-1821 (ext.3).

Cost Share Programs

Fred Tritapoe

Conservation Reserve Program - CRP provides landowners with the opportunity to retire cropland in environmentally sensitive areas. The continuous sign-up allows for the establishment of wildlife areas, trees, filter strips, and riparian buffers. The CP-33 (Quail Habitat Buffers) has provided Colleton County Landowners with incentives to establish native cover along the edge of crop fields. Several thousand acres have been retired from agricultural production and placed in the CRP. Several landowners have chosen to reenroll their expiring contracts during FY 2013. Colleton County had 10 additional CRP Contracts last year.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP provides incentive payments up to 75% cost sharing for conservation practices such as microirrigation, erosion control structures, field borders, pasture and hayland practices, livestock management, and animal waste facilities. In the event an applicant is considered historically underserved, he or she may receive up to a 90% cost share rate. In Colleton County, there are currently 1,922 acres enrolled in this program. EQIP also provides for Limited Resource Farmers, New and/or Beginning Farmers, and Organic Farmers. Cost-share items include but are not limited to microirrigation, residue management, prescribed grazing, fencing, heavy use area establishment, livestock watering facility, forage and biomass planting, and record keeping. Several applications were approved under the EQIP-LLI (Longleaf Initiative) for planting longleaf pines during FY 2013.

Wetland Reserve Program - WRP is a voluntary program to restore wetlands that have been manipulated through drainage. Landowners can establish permanent conservation easements on land offered and in return receive payment on the agricultural value of the land as well as 100 percent of the cost of restoration. Regardless of program application, all potential participants must meet eligibility requirements prior to receiving approval. A landowner must own the land 7 years in order to be eligible for the WRP.

Conservation Stewardship Program – CSP was recently released as part of the 2008 Farm Bill. This program provides incentives as a result of past conservation activity accomplishments. It also encourages producers to enhance their operations by implementing additional conservation activities in addressing our natural resource concerns.

Healthy Forests Reserve Program - HFRP is a voluntary program which encourages landowners to restore, enhance, and protect forestland resources on private land through easements (permanent or 30 years) and 10 year cost-share agreements. The primary objective of the HFRP is to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species along with management of longleaf pine plantations.



Rural Americans face many unique challenges – and every day, the U.S. Department of Agriculture provides assistance to help grow American agriculture and increase opportunity for rural communities. Unfortunately, 90 percent of America's persistent poverty counties are in rural America—and we can't allow these areas to be left behind. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is expanding its

"StrikeForce" Initiative in 10 additional states, including South Carolina. The primary goal of the StrikeForce Initiative is to increase partnership with rural communities and leverage community resources in targeted, persistent poverty areas. Vilsack noted that through the StrikeForce Initiative, USDA will do more to partner with local and state governments and community organizations on projects that promote economic development and job creation. In South Carolina, the initiative will target the counties of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Calhoun, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Hampton, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Williamsburg.

Web Soil Survey

Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. NRCS has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties and anticipates having 100 percent in the near future. The site is updated and maintained online (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>) as the single authoritative source of soil survey information.



Longleaf Pine Initiative

Longleaf pine forests once encompassed more than 90 million acres of the North American landscape. Today, only 3.4 million acres remain and yet Longleaf pine forests represent some of the world's most biologically diverse ecosystems. The Longleaf pine ecosystem provides critical habitat for 29 threatened and endangered species.

The Longleaf Pine Initiative began when an interdepartmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among USDA, the Department of Interior and the Department of Defense identified the longleaf pine ecosystem as a priority resource concern.

As part of the initiative, NRCS and its conservation partners in nine states are helping private landowners improve the sustainability and profitability of Longleaf pine forest ecosystems. The following important conservation practices improve the forests' health: forest stand improvement, prescribed burning, restoration and management of rare or declining habitats, and tree/shrub establishment.

NRCS Farm Bill conservation programs provide landowners technical and financial assistance. States involved in the initiative include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia.

Conservation Projects in Colleton

photos by Eddie Mitchell



HUA for Hay Ring ~ James Gibson



HUA for Corral ~ James Gibson



Prescribed Burning ~ Myrtle Ann Dennis



Well & Pumping Plant ~ Bryan Farms



Chemical Site Prep ~ Ben Teasdel



Loblolly Tree Planting ~ Ben Teasdel

Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District
531 Robertson Blvd., Suite B
Walterboro, SC 29488

Phone: 843-549-1821 (ext. 3)

Fax: 843-549-6001

The Colleton Soil and Water Conservation District Board meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month except November. Please call 549-1821 (ext. 3) for more information.

Conservation Projects in Colleton County

photos by Eddie Mitchell



Prescribed Burning ~ Rizer Farms



Brush Management ~ Rose Hill Plantation



Longleaf Tree Planting ~ Barn Property LP



Grass Planting ~ William Bailey