



Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District

Annual Report 2014~2015



531 Robertson Blvd, Suite B, Walterboro, SC

August 2015

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John P. Frank, Commissioner
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SC Department of Natural Resources
Marc L. Cribb, Program Manager
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Fred Tritapoe, District Conservationist
Eddie Mitchell, Soil Conservation Tech

The Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District is 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. USDA-NRCS provides technical support and SCDNR provides educational support.

2014 Conservationist of the Year ~ Correy M. Fore

The Colleton County Soil & Water Conservation District was delighted to present our 2014 Conservationist of the Year Award to Mrs. Correy M. Fore. With careful planning, Mrs. Fore transformed a huge field overgrown with gum trees and other blighted vegetation into a successful cattle farm.

To provide a sustainable source of summer grazing, Bahia grass was planted across the pastures. Cross-fencing was added to prevent cattle from overgrazing. Designated areas for cattle to cross streams were also made to protect the water quality. Windbreaks were created from natural woods and vegetation. Rye and ryegrass are drilled to interseed into the Bahia grass for winter grazing. All of these practices help to prevent soil erosion and reduce runoff.

In addition to maintaining existing natural areas for wildlife and implementing modern conservation practices, the farm was also landscaped with ornamental trees which provide beauty and serve as an attractant for many species of pollinators. Walking trails were established to allow family and friends a chance to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the outdoors.



I.M. Benton & Mrs. Correy Fore

Annually, the farm raises 30 to 35 Registered Black Angus bulls and heifers to sell. Natural breeding and artificial insemination are used in the breeding process. All animals are treated with the utmost respect and care. And if anyone ever doubted this producer's commitment to her cattle, they just have not talked to her. Her knowledge and passion both run deep.

Mrs. Fore grew up in the city, but was a country girl at heart. She always loved horses but began to love cattle while visiting her grandmother in Bennettsville, SC as a young girl. Her husband's cousin taught her about genetics before she started in the breeding business. Even today, she continues to study and learn ways to improve her operation. By being a forward thinker, and being willing to adapt, her farm will continue to prosper.

Her farm's name, Hawk Haven Cattle Company, also shows her leaning to conservation as she has a great love for hawks.

It was with great pleasure that we recognized Mrs. Correy M. Fore of Hawk Haven Cattle Company as the 2014 Conservationist of the Year.

Sudie Thomas ~ Banquet Speaker

We welcomed Sudie Daves-Thomas, Wildlife Biologist, with the SC Natural Resources Conservation Service as our Guest Speaker. As a Wildlife Biologist, Mrs. Thomas provides technical support and training for SC NRCS staff and clients. She works with wildlife issues and projects involving natural community restoration, wildlife habitat improvement and management, plant identification, rare and listed species, as well as wetland restoration on private lands.

She works with many partner groups including the SC Exotic Pest Plant Council, the SC Native Plant Society, and the SC Partners for the Restoration of Native Plant Communities.

Recently, Mrs. Thomas worked with the Florida Plant Materials Center and the Xerces Society to provide guidance to NRCS and clients about pollinator habitat establishment and improvement with native plant species.

Mrs. Thomas gave an informative power point presentation on pollinators. She said the best known pollinator, the honey bee, is but one of the many pollinators we see each day. There are 700 species of bees in the Eastern part of the country. Pollinators include native bees, bumblebees, butterflies, hummingbirds, bats, wasp, beetles, moths, and even animals.

She discussed how important the pollinators were to our nation's food supply. She encouraged people to create a habitat for pollinators by planting native flowers, installing houses for bats, and nest boxes for native bees. She also stressed the need to keep the pollinators healthy by using caution when applying pesticides.

In closing she encouraged everyone to "Be A Friend To Pollinators".



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.



Soil & Water Stewardship Week

"Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Pollinators" was the theme for the 60th Anniversary of Soil & Water Stewardship Week. Pollinators are an important part of our community. While many pollinators may seem like just annoying insects, they are actually a very important part of the web of life upon which we all depend. Pollinators form the underpinning of a healthy and sustainable future for food and the environment, but they have shown disturbing signs of decline in recent years. When pollinators shrink in number, many plants either produce less seed or no seed at all. The bottom line is, when pollinators start disappearing, plants start disappearing. Most plants depend upon pollinators to reproduce. While animals can travel and move around to find mates and reproduce, plants are rooted to one spot. Therefore, plants depend on pollinators to move pollen from their anthers to their stigma. On planet Earth there are more than 100,000 species of insects, including bees, flies, moths, butterflies and beetles that work hard as pollinators. There are over 1,000 species of other animals such as birds, reptiles and mammals, including bats that pollinate plants.

To celebrate Stewardship Week Rev. Mabry organized a tour of Bee City. Our tour group was educated on the importance of honey bees. We learned about bees, beekeeping equipment and how to successfully maintain an active hive. We viewed an active bee hive and observed the workers, drones, and the queen bee busy at work. It was amazing to watch the bees! We enjoyed the Bee City Gift Shop where we could purchase locally produced honey and beeswax products. The Petting Zoo was also quite an attraction with a variety of domestic and exotic animals. Everyone enjoyed our visit to Bee City.

Rev. Mabry and the Conservation District also promoted the use of Stewardship resource materials in our area churches.

2014 ~ 2015 Earth Day Poster & Essay Contest ***"Local Heroes-Your Hardworking Pollinators"***



The theme, "Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Pollinators" was also the theme for the Annual Poster and Essay Contest. Pollinators are important to our nation's food supply. About 1/3 of all the food we eat depends on their pollination– everything from coffee and chocolate to most fruits and many vegetables. When we start to think about what we ate yesterday for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, we start to understand the importance of pollinators in our own diet. Over 150 food crops in the United States depend on pollinators. Pollinators are also fascinating to watch and study.

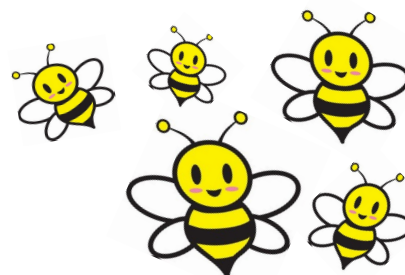
The Colleton Conservation District is proud to recognize the winners in our poster, and essay contest. We received 13 posters, and 99 essays. The participating schools were: Northside Elementary, Forest Hills Elementary, Colleton County Middle School, North Walterboro Christian Academy, Colleton Preparatory Academy and Homeschools.

Poster Winners

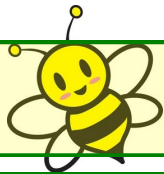


The poster contest is a class project. Awards were presented to the winning classes by grade level. The winning teachers received \$50.00 and a certificate for their class and were recognized at our Annual Banquet.

Mrs. Bell's K- Preschool class at North Walterboro Christian Academy
Mrs. Kathy Houck's 1st Grade class at Colleton Preparatory Academy
Mrs. Martin's 2nd Grade class at North Walterboro Christian Academy
Mrs. Diane Smoak's 3rd Grade class at North Walterboro Christian Academy
Mrs. Lisa Mixson's 4th Grade class at North Walterboro Christian Academy
Mrs. Nicole Cain's 5th Grade class at Colleton Preparatory Academy



We would like to thank Wydette Ackerman-N Walterboro Christian Academy, Jill Burttram-Colleton Prep Academy, Cindy Riley-Forest Hills Elementary, and Tracy McDonald– Northside Elementary for their support.



Essay Winners

6th Grade

1st Place ~ Kyle Hooker

Colleton Preparatory Academy

2nd Place ~ Kenleigh Crosby

Colleton Preparatory Academy

3rd Place ~ Gage Farish

Colleton Preparatory Academy

7th Grade

1st Place ~ Francis Blubaugh

Colleton Preparatory Academy

2nd Place ~ Dawson Sweat

Colleton Preparatory Academy

3rd Place ~ Gabe Pineda

N. Walterboro Christian Academy

8th Grade

1st Place ~ Felisha Hodge

N. Walterboro Christian Academy

2nd Place ~ Mary Shearouse

N. Walterboro Christian Academy

3rd Place ~ Alexianna Flores

Colleton Preparatory Academy

Banquet Photos

photos ~ Fred Tritapoe



Mrs. Houck



Gabe Pineda



Mrs. Bell



Felisha Hodge



Mrs. Martin & Josh Jones



Mrs. Smoak



Mrs. Mixson





Pollination Fast Facts For Farmers and Ranchers

What do pollinators mean to your land?



Native bees, butterflies, beetles, ants and flies are all valuable crop pollinators.

Pollinating insects help to increase your crop yields and add money to your bottom line.

Inadequate pollination will reduce your yields, result in inferior flavor, produce smaller, misshapen fruits with fewer seeds, slow fruit maturation, increase disease in fruit and take money from budget.

In the United States, pollinators help you and others to produce nearly \$20 billion worth of products annually.

Native insects act as a cushion when managed honey bees and bumble bees are in short supply.

It is estimated that these beneficial native insects can provide up to 30% of your pollination needs. Unfortunately, these pollinators are in serious decline.

Our farm and ranch lands that support pollinators are disappearing at the alarming rate of 3,000 acres a day. The remaining farm and ranch lands lose pollinators' valuable services as their surrounding habitat declines.

What can you do for pollinators?

Increase the numbers of pollinators on your agricultural lands. This will support other wildlife such as birds and game animals, improve the quality of water runoff, decrease your soil loss, and reduce your need for expensive pesticides. By cooperating with gov't programs for improving pollinator habitat, you may be qualified for financial support. Check with your local state extension office or soil conservation district.

Learn how to reduce the direct exposure of pollinators to pesticides and how to protect critical nesting sites and food sources for beneficial insects & pollinators.



Restore pollinator friendly practices at your farm. Study the habitat on your land: look for areas that can support all kinds of pollinators and other wildlife.

Renew forage and nesting habitats by adding flowering plants, hedge rows, butterfly way stations and other shrubs.

Expand your efforts. Use reduced-tillage practices (many native bees live in the soil). Start to develop riparian (streamside) zones for wildlife habitats and corridors. Allow crops to bolt to give these pollinators additional food sources and to encourage them to stay around for when you have need of them.

2014 ~ 2015 Affiliate Members

The Colleton Soil and 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. Our Annual Report highlights our activities and is sent to affiliate members in August. 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*.

Benefactor

AgSouth Farm Credit, ACA
Carolyn S. Godley
Coastal Electric Coop., Inc.
Cockfield Plantation
Dr. Joseph F. Flowers
Loblolly Tree Farm, LP
New York Life Insurance Co.
Palmetto Rural Telephone Coop.
Rhodes Oil Company, Inc.
Rizer's Pork & Produce
Wood Bros. Inc.

Contributing

American Forestry Management
Beach Forest Management
Benton's Feed, Seed & Garden
BlackWater Civil Engineering
Breland Hill Farm
Cheeha-Combahee Plantation
Colleton County Farm Bureau
Hill Tire Center
Lowcountry Soil Consulting
Norris & Mary Laffitte
Ravenwood Plantation
Ruffin Farm Supply
White Wood, Inc.

Supporting

Bank of Walterboro
David W. Barnes
Donald J. Holmes CPA
Enterprise Bank of SC
Gregory & Mary Hudson
Henry & Becky Varn
Rizer Farms
Lowcountry Dentistry
Tire King
Williams Farms LLC

In Kind

Gladys M. Murray Flowers

Memorials

Memory of C.E. Godley, Jr.
Carolyn S. Godley

Affiliate Membership ~ 2015-2016

Please check one:

- ☐ Supporting Membership \$35.00
☐ Contributing Membership \$50.00
☐ Benefactor Membership \$100.00
☐ Conservator Membership \$200.00+
☐ 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 _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

I prefer to receive Annual Report via (check one): ☐ US Mail ☐ E-Mail



Thank you ~ Roger L. Harriett



Roger Harriett began his affiliation with the Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District on October 19, 1989 when he became an Associate Commissioner. On April 17, 1990 he was appointed by South Carolina Land Resources Conservation Commission to fill an elected commissioner's position. Roger ran for the commissioner's position in the November 1990 General Election and won a 4-year term.

During his time on the Board he served on various committees and attended numerous meetings and conferences on the conservation of our natural resources. At our Annual Banquet the Board recognized Roger for his years of dedicated service.

Thank you, Roger Harriett. We appreciate your 25 years of service and dedication to the Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District. We will miss you.

Welcome ~ John P. Frank

The Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioner's welcomes John Frank to the Conservation District Board. In the November General Election, John was elected commissioner and will serve a 4-year term.

John grew up in the Pleasant Grove area of Colleton County and attended Colleton County Schools. He graduated in 1988. Currently he is employed with the Colleton County School District in Walterboro as Grounds Supervisor.

John will join the other Board Members, I.M. Benton, Cleveland Hiott, Gary Herndon, Joshua Jones and together they will work to protect and conserve the natural resources in Colleton County.

Please join us in welcoming John Frank to the Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District.

74th Annual Conservation Partnership Conference

The 74th Annual South Carolina Conservation Partnership Conference was held in Columbia on February 24-25, 2015 at the Marriott. The focus of the conference was Waters of the US and International Year of Soil.

The program was designed for all people interested in conservation - for landowners, conservationists, farmers, and natural resource professionals.

- **Waters of the US-The SC Perspective** NACD's interim CEO Jeremy Peters participated in the meeting and spoke on a panel with Michael Wright, Legislative Coordinator, SC Farm Bureau and Rodney Berry, Office of US Congressman Tom Rice about regulatory pressure on private lands and the importance of voluntary, incentive based conservation solutions. Peters also spoke at the SCACD Legislative Banquet. He emphasized the grassroots credibility that districts have when working with legislators at the state and federal level.
- **Soil Health-International Year of Soil** presented by Pam Thomas, Associate Director of Soil Survey Programs and David Lamm, National Soil Health and Sustainability Leader.
- **Surface Water Study Update** presented by Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director SC Department of Natural Resource.
- **DNR Quail Restoration Initiative** presented by Willie Simmons, SCDNR.

The Annual Conservation Partnership Conference is jointly sponsored by the SC Association of Conservation Districts, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the SC Department of Natural Resources, and the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

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 687 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 ACEP (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program). Colleton County had 47 EQIP Applications and 6 CSP Applications in FY 2015. 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 2015. Colleton County had 5 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 1,743 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 2015.



Agriculture Conservation Easement Program - ACEP was established under the 2014 Farm Bill. It is a new program that consolidates three former programs— the Wetlands Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and the Farm & Ranch Land Protection Program. 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 2 years in order to be eligible for the ACEP.



Conservation Stewardship Program - CSP maintains its role as part of the 2014 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.

Conservation Projects in Colleton County

photos ~ Eddie Mitchell



Livestock Shade Structure
James H. Gibson



Heavy Use Areas and Water Facilities
Michael L. Dopson



Well, Pumping Plant, and Livestock Pipeline
Michael L. Dopson



Forage and Biomass Planting
Bryan Farms LLC

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

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

Fax: 855-733-3585

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 ~ Eddie Mitchell



Mechanical Site Prep ~Joseph Hamilton



Forage & Biomass Planting ~ I.M. Benton Jr.



Forage & Biomass Planting ~ Kevin G. Ahl



Residue Management ~ W. Jack Nettles