



Williamsburg Conservation Update

Williamsburg Soil & Water Conservation District

2012 Annual Report

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



Conservation Achievement Award



Dennis Holt was selected by the Williamsburg Conservation District to receive the 2012 Conservation Achievement Award. Mr. Holt is the owner of Springfield Plantation, a 7,000 acre plantation and tree farm and wetland wildlife preserve. Since purchasing the property 22 years ago, he has increased the acreage and planted well over a million trees on the property. He has also put in 5 ponds. The Plantation is managed by Curtis Siemn, brother in law of Dennis and Brooks Holt. He manages it for wildlife which includes deer, turkey, quail and pheasant. The plantation is a habitat for migratory waterfowl and endangered and threatened species. He believes in supporting the local economy and does so with the businesses that he owns locally - United Finance and Family Cash Advance which employ 35- 40 local citizens. Dennis is a big supporter of Senator Yancey McGill and said Senator McGill "Has worked hard to bring new business into the county and preserve the beauty of the county." Dennis says that Williamsburg County is very beautiful and the residents should appreciate it. His love for the beauty of the area lead him to oppose the landfill which would have come to the area recently. Dennis began his career as a child actor on the Ozzie and Harriet show where he worked for seven years. He then went on to become the founder and chairman of US International Media, Western International Media and Patriot Communications. He is one of the most influential figures in the advertising industry and has received many awards and honors for his work in the radio industry over the past 35 years. Some of them are the Man of the Year Award in Advertising, SC Ambassador for Economic Development, Humanitarian Award, Meritorious Service Medal and the Man of the Millenium. He is an advertising industry leader and innovator, humanitarian and philanthropist, who often works 12-14 hours a day tirelessly. But he still finds time for the active charity work which he and his wife perform. He and his wife, Brooks, were both born on farms but grew up in the city and wanted a home where they could enjoy the outdoors. This led them to purchase Springfield Plantation. Along with their three children, and other family, the Holt family enjoys spending time at Springfield Plantation. The Plantation is rich in colonial history and it is being managed for the commercial production of forest products, while protecting wildlife and plant life. Mr. Holt's love for nature compels him to protect it.

Arbor Day

In South Carolina, Arbor Day is celebrated on the first Friday in December. The Williamsburg SWCD observed it by providing 500 pecan trees to fourth grade students across the county. Each student got a seedling to take home, plant and watch grow. Trees give us countless benefits like homes for people and animals, protection from the wind and erosion, paper products, oxygen, and of course, nuts and fruits.



Photography Contest



The Williamsburg Conservation District 2012 winner of the Annual Photography Contest was Marian Nell Easler, a student at Williamsburg Academy, who won with her photo "The Farm House". Students in grades 9-12 from all schools in the county were eligible to enter. Photos could be entered in four different categories, Trees and Plants, Native Wildlife, Rural Life, and Landscapes. Her winning photo is on display at the Conservation District office.



Poster Contest

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District annual Poster Contest topic was "Soil to Spoon". Kindergarten through third grade classes submitted posters. The winners were: K4 –Ms. J. McGill's class at DP Cooper Elementary, K5 – Ms. Mary Lynn Hagwood's class at The King's Academy, First Grade – Ms. Nicole Scott's class at DP Cooper Elementary, Second Grade – Mr. C. Power's class at DP Cooper Elementary and Third Grade – Mrs. Tracey Stuckey's class at Hemingway Day School. The students posters were very creative and helped them understand more about how and where their food is grown, and the process involved to get it to their plates. The posters were displayed at the Conservation District office at 502 Martin Luther King Hwy. in Kingstree. The winning classes received their choice of either a pizza or ice cream party.



Essay Contest

2012 Essay Contest Winners Announced

The Williamsburg Soil and Water Conservation District's annual Essay Contest received many entries from elementary and junior high students throughout the county. The topic of the contest was *Soil to Spoon*. The students' essays researched how food makes the journey from the soil to the spoon. They learned how food is grown, harvested and processed from the soil and how important it is to protect our soil. A large amount of essays were entered in the contest totaling 221.

The winners of this year's competition receiving an award and cash prize were: 4th grade – Anastasia Rouse at DP Cooper Elementary, 5th grade – McCabe Morris at Williamsburg Academy, 6th grade – Ryan Storey at The King's Academy, 7th grade – Ashlyn Adams at Williamsburg Academy and 8th grade – Josh Rodgers at Williamsburg Academy. The teacher who submitted the most essays was Mrs. Laura Jones of Williamsburg Academy, winning prize money to use in her classroom. Second and Third runners up were: 4th grade – James Allen Moore and Hailey Gaskins, 5th grade - Reed McCracken and Andrea Marlowe, 6th grade – Hampton Beard and Hailey Brown, 7th grade – Chandler Swicord and Kimberlyn McCall, and 8th grade – Gracen Parker and Kiara Rious.



Pictured: These students, who won first place in the Williamsburg Conservation District's Essay Contest, were presented with certificates and award money by the District for their winning essays. They are: (left to right) 4th Grade – Anastasia Rouse, 6th Grade – Ryan Storey, 8th Grade – Josh Rodgers, 5th Grade – McCabe Morris, 7th Grade – Ashlyn Adams and Ms. Laura Jones - the teacher who submitted the most essays.

Garden Project



This year Williamsburg Academy fourth grade teacher, Kathy McCullough, created a garden at the school for her students. The conservation district provided the financial assistance needed to purchase the supplies to get the project started. Not only are the elementary students involved in the project but high school students assisted in building the raised beds and completing the garden. Students in many grades have access to the garden. The



students get lesson plans for both Math and Science used in conjunction with the garden. It affects approximately 150 students. Also the District donated a picnic table for the students to use in conjunction with the garden.

Soil Stewardship Week

Soil to Spoon

Soil Stewardship Week April 29 – May 5, 2012

Each day people take a spoon of food and put it in their mouth. Where does all of that food come from? How does it get from the soil to the spoon? It is a long process that depends on many people across the country, and sometimes the world.

The world population is on the rise, while agricultural land is shrinking. The year 2011 saw the world population increase to 7 billion, and it is estimated to increase to 8.2 billion by 2030. At the same time, usable agricultural land is disappearing. Each product you use can be traced back to the soil, and soil is

an important ingredient in the production process. Most people rarely think about the important role of soil in the food they eat daily. Farmers and ranchers take great care of their soil. Most of their families have been working the same land for generations and they understand the important link between healthy soil and healthy food. Soil can't be treated like dirt!

At your next meal, try and think where each product came from, and how far it had to travel before it reached your plate. And remember to thank your local agriculture community members for their work to provide for our nation and the world.

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.” John Muir

Earth Day



Money may not grow on trees, but heat, electricity, liquid fuel, and even plastics do. Children can learn how through *The Hidden Treasure*, an educational comic book distributed by the Williamsburg Conservation District. This teaching tool shows young people and families how woody biomass from our nation's woodlands can provide a wealth of products and energy resources. 500 copies were distributed to 4th grade students at every school in Williamsburg County on April 22, Earth Day.

GrowFood Carolina

On February 9, 2012 District Coordinator, Denise Smith, represented the Conservation District at an informative meeting at GrowFood Carolina's warehouse and distribution center in Mt. Pleasant.

They are trying to get the word out to local farmers and producers about their local food hub which will serve to help link local farmers to local and regional markets by providing adequate infrastructure and coordination so that fresh produce can move seamlessly from local farmers' land to consumers' hands.



GrowFood Carolina provides marketing, warehousing, and distribution functions for local farmers, in addition to liability insurance, regulatory compliance and sales coordination. When you buy produce with the **GrowFood Carolina** label on it, you know that you are getting a product that was hand-picked by a local farmer within days of your purchase.



What is a local food hub?

The current working definition by the USDA is: A centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products. Located at 990 Morrison Drive in Charleston, the warehouse is in close proximity to urban and suburban restaurants and grocery stores. The building has 6,500 square feet of warehouse space. For questions or more information about **GrowFood Carolina**, please contact Sara Clow, GrowFood Carolina General Manager at sarac@growfoodcarolina.com or visit their website at www.growfoodcarolina.com.

Goat Management Seminar



Clemson University Cooperative Extension and NRCS conducted a daylong seminar with Lee Van Vlak, the Area Livestock Specialist. Held on November 2, 2012, the program covered several important aspects to goat owners and producers in the Pee Dee Region. The topics were forage varieties, forage establishment, goat reproductive cycle, signs of labor and kidding, castration, hoof issues and trimming, injections and internal parasites and using FAMACHA. Local goat farmer Woody Bone was sponsored by the district to attend the meetings.

Water Footprint

You may have some understanding about your carbon footprint, but how much do you know about your water footprint?

People use lots of water for drinking, cooking and washing, but even more for producing things such as food, paper, cotton clothes, etc. The water footprint is an indicator of water use that looks at both direct and indirect water use of a consumer or producer. The water footprint of an individual, community or business is defined as the total volume of freshwater that is used to produce the goods and services consumed by the individual or community or produced by the business.

For example, 11 gallons of water are needed to irrigate and wash the fruit in one half-gallon container of orange juice. Thirty-seven gallons of water are used to grow, produce, package, and ship the beans in that morning cup of coffee. Two hundred and sixty-four gallons of water are required to produce one quart of milk, and 4,200 gallons of water are required to produce two pounds of beef.

You can go to www.waterfootprint.com and click on the water footprint calculator or on Your Water Footprint to access your own unique water footprint. The average person uses 1,056 gallons of water each day



“When the well’s dry, we know the worth of water.” Benjamin Franklin

Rain Gauges

CoCoRaHS stands for Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow network, a grassroots volunteer network of backyard weather observers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow) in their local communities. By using low-cost measurement tools, stressing training and education, and utilizing an interactive Web-site, their aim is to provide the highest quality data for natural resource, education and research applications. The Williamsburg Conservation District provided 4 rain gauges to individuals in the county to help provide accurate weather reporting for the county. This is an excellent project for schools as the program provides lesson plans and activities for the classroom that teach basic concepts of meteorology that meet science education standards for a variety of grade levels. Members of the community with an interest in weather can help provide data valuable to meteorologists, farmers and researchers on drought conditions and water supplies. The National Weather Service even depends on CoCoRaHS data to spot trends and improve forecasting. It is easy to volunteer and only takes a few minutes each day. A volunteer must have access to the internet, the ability to browse the CoCoRaHS web site, be willing to enter rainfall data on a daily basis and install an approved rain gauge on a good open site on their property. To learn more or to sign up, visit www.cocorahs.org. The only requirements to join are an enthusiasm for watching and reporting weather conditions and a desire to learn more about how weather can effect and impact our lives.



SC NRCS is working with the [Center for Heirs Property Preservation](http://centerforheirspropertypreservation.org), based out of Charleston, to host outreach workshops, in the six county area of Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester and Georgetown. The first of these workshops was hosted Saturday, December 8th, in Georgetown County. NRCS District Conservationists Trinette Vereen and Debbie Mann helped. The Center for Heirs Property coordinated the meeting and made presentations about conservation programs as it relates to the 2008 Farm Bill. The Center is a non-profit organization that provides education and direct legal services to heir's property owners. They help people who want to keep family land and get clear title to their property. For more information visit the Heirs Property website at www.heirsproperty.org.



Conservation Partnership Programs & Accomplishments

Conservation Programs Protect Soil, Water, and Wildlife

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program “EQIP” helps farmers improve production while protecting environmental quality by addressing such concerns as soil erosion and productivity, grazing management, water quality, animal waste, and forestry concerns.

In South Carolina, EQIP will pay 75 percent of the costs of eligible conservation practices under the general sign-up. Historically Underserved who are Limited Resource, Socially Disadvantaged, and Beginning Farmers are eligible for 90 percent cost share. Those to be considered Socially Disadvantaged for this program are American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders.

Organic Initiative: NRCS helps certified organic growers and producers working to achieve organic certification install conservation practices for organic production. **In Williamsburg County 1 contract was awarded to transition to organic farming and 3 contracts were awarded to producers to implement an Organic Conservation Activity Plan.**

Longleaf Pine Initiative: NRCS offers both technical and financial assistance to help landowners improve habitat on agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest and Tribal land, with conservation practices including longleaf pine, installing firebreaks, conducting prescribed burning and controlling invasive plants. In 2012, 1 contract was awarded under this initiative covering 31 acres.

Seasonal High Tunnel Pilot Initiative: NRCS helps producers plan and implement high tunnels. A seasonal high tunnel is a polyethylene covered structure with no electrical, heating, and/or mechanical ventilation systems that is used to cover crops and extend the season in an environmentally friendly manner.

In 2012, 3 Seasonal High Tunnels were installed in Williamsburg County.

“Seasonal High Tunnel “Hoop House”



In 2012, Williamsburg County was part of a special initiative titled **The I-95 Corridor EQIP Initiative** that concentrated financial assistance to seventeen counties in an effort to improve the economic viability and improve the 2.2 million acres of farmland located in that region. This initiative was successful due in part to our partnership with Representative James Clyburn’s office that assisted us in getting the word out about the sign-up. 7 contracts were awarded totaling \$72, 281.60 on 148.8 acres. Some of the contracts awarded included micro-irrigation and a seasonal high tunnel for specialty crops, heavy use areas, pipeline, stream crossings, biomass (grass) planting, watering facilities for livestock and firebreaks for forestland.



Before the HEAVY USE AREA



After installing the HEAVY USE AREA

Summary:

10 contracts were awarded to Historically Underserved Producers totaling \$88,146.21 on 928.9 acres

5 Contracts were awarded for the Lower Pee Cropland General sign-up totaling \$62,086.42 on 4,587.0 acres

2 Contracts were awarded for the Lower Pee Pasture General sign-up totaling \$21, 971.70 on 300 acres

The Conservation Stewardship Program, (CSP) authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and nonindustrial forestland. In 2012, Williamsburg County was awarded 4 contracts for \$63,386.00 on 2,079 acres. Some of the contracts include plant tissue testing for nitrogen based crops to reduce the excessive use of fertilization.

2012 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 and of Williamsburg County. Thank you Affiliates

CORPORATE

Sparrow & Kennedy Tractor
Company, Inc.
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Longland Plantation
Wake Stone Corp.
Carsten Farms, Inc.
Tri-County Cotton Growers, LLC
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GOLD

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