

Dillon Soil & Water Conservation Quarterly Newsletter



1212 Commerce Dr.
Dillon, SC 29536
843-774-5122 ext. 3

Initial CIG Grant Field Visit

On November 20th & 21st the CIG team visited the fields in Dillon County. Dr. Buz Klott, a soil science researcher from the University of South Carolina; Jackie Reed and Dr. Charlie Ogg, soil scientist with the USDA-NRCS;



Researcher Dr. Buz Klott from the USC-Earth Sciences and Resources Institute and NRCS soil scientist Jack Reed collect and characterize soil samples.

Three farmers in Dillon County, Carl Coleman, Sonny Price and Alan Gaddy, are embarking on a three-year journey to realize the impacts multi-species cover crops and no-till management can have on nutrient availability, soil health, and crop yields.

During their two-day fieldwork blitz, the team established control points in the fields and documented initial soil parameters such as soil structure, bulk density, and a variety of topsoil characteristics. They also took notes about the cropping history for each field and spoke with the farmers about their expectations for the



Example of cover crop planted in Coleman field

project.

Fall cover crop blends have already been planted in the demonstration fields. The seed mixes include including legumes (e.g., clover and peas) for nitrogen fixation, grasses (e.g., oats and rye) for nutrient scavenging, and brassica species (e.g., tillage radishes) to reduce soil compaction and store nutrients.

These cover crops are expected to improve soil health, increase soil biology,



Carl Coleman, being interviewed for the SC Wildlife Magazine article that will be featured in an upcoming issue

protect the soil from erosion, and provide nutrients for next year's cash crops.

Spring sampling will indicate how effective these cover crops were and how much commercial fertilizer the farmers can forego due to the nutrients the cover crops are able to provide. As a part of the

Conservation Innovation Grant project, the team surveyed and sampled the soils to establish a baseline. These measurements will be repeated after three years of multispecies cover cropping and no-till management to demonstrate the effects these conservation practices have on the soil.

Soil scientists characterize soil by a variety of factors, including color, texture, and structure.

Board of Commissioners
Neal Rogers—Chairman
Carl Coleman—Sec/Treas.
Keith Allen—Commissioner
Alan Gaddy—Commissioner
Sonny Price—Commissioner
Mendel “Bud” Price—Assoc.

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Follow Dr. Buzz Klott @ <http://dirtidiaries.com/vlog/>

Soil Health 5th Grade Essay Contest Winners



1st Place Winner

The winning essay was submitted by Lauren Rogers and teacher Shea Wallace. For the overall winning essay each received \$50.00 cash from the Soil & Water Conservation District. Congratulations goes to Lauren Ms. Wallace!!



Gordon Elementary Class Winners

Abigail Bristow, Austin Coward, Lauren Rogers, Noah Carter, James Avery Hewitt, Ayana Moultrie, Angel Harrison, Mariann Thompson, Destiny Ward. Pictured with the students is Principal Famon Whitfield (far left) and Ange-Baker, Dillon Soil & Water Conservation District Coordinator (far right)



Each class winner and their teachers received a \$25.00 gift card from the Dillon Soil & Water Conservation District.

2nd Place Winner

The 2nd place winning essay was submitted by Luke Shelly of LV Elementary and teacher Pam Gasque. Each received a \$25.00 gift card from the Soil & Water Conservation District. Congratulations to Luke and Ms. Gasque!!



Lake View Elementary Class Winners

From left to right: Teacher Kim Garris, class winner Kaylee Sophia El-Mahdy; Morgan Williams, class winner, teacher Stephanie Long; Teacher Pam Gasque with Luke Shelley.



All winners and teachers received a \$25.00 gift card from the Soil & Water Conservation District.

3rd. Place Winner

The 3rd place winning essay was submitted by Mackenzie Miller and teacher Ms. Mary Brown. For the winning entry each received a \$25.00 gift card from the Soil & Water Conservation District. Congratulations and a special “thank you” goes to Mackenzie & Ms. Brown.



Coordinator's Corner

(update on my world events)

Anyone that knows me, knows I love to talk, so this little section gives me that opportunity, only it's in print. It has been a busy quarter with the essay contest, Arbor Day, CIG Grant and end of the year activities, whew! It's the beginning of a new year and along with that comes new goals, new outlook and new challenges. There are so many ways for us to improve the way we perform our job, our relationships with one another and that change may be our ATTITUDE toward them.

My goal for this year, is to think outside the box that has been painted in around me. To educate the community about what the Soil and Water Conservation District does for Dillon County and how our neighbors can become involved in helping us, help others. The biggest initiative in Dillon county in regards to conservation is Soil Health and what exactly makes soil “healthy”.

During my time here in district, I have learned that not all dirt is the same. Healthy soil is living soil! It's one that has creepy crawlies in it, has not been tilled, or plowed up, and has crops that are never intended be harvested (referred to as “cover crops”)—they are there for the nutrients they will provide. WOW— what a great way to look at our lives. There are things that are planted in our lives to provide us with nutrients that will make us better people. There may never be a great “harvest” of those initial cover crops, but in years to come there will be an even greater harvest of fruits and crops—because we had those “cover crops” and didn't dig the land up (tillage) and even allowed the creepy crawlies into our lives!!!



Arbor Day Celebrated

Gordon Elementary

A ceremony to celebrate Arbor Day was held on the morning of December 6th at Gordon Elementary and was followed by a tree planting by the 4th grade students immediately after the indoor program. Ms. Sarah Price Lynch's students that are in the community outreach after school program helped plant the Tuscarora Crape Myrtle that Dillon Soil & Water Conservation District gave to the school for Arbor Day. Every student helped with planting the tree by taking a shovel and placing dirt in the hole to cover the tree!! Years from now they can look back and say "I remember when I helped plant that tree"!

A special thanks to all the students that were a part of this program and to the staff at Gordon Elementary – without their continued support and interest, it would not be possible to teach our children about the importance of conservation and our environment.



Lake View Elementary

It was a perfect sunny day to celebrate with the 4th graders at Lake View Elementary and to teach them about Arbor Day while letting them

participate in planting a tree. A Tuscarora Crape Myrtle was given to the school and the site for the tree was prepared by Lake View Agriculture students; A.J. Rogers, Madison Matthews and Brittany Hardee.

The ceremony began with a little fun and then moved into asking them if they knew what Arbor Day was and what we do on that day. It was fun to hear their answers but it was also exciting to see their faces when they were told they were going to help plant the tree that was there.

It's amazing what joy it gave them to put a shovel in their hands and have them throw dirt into a hole! After the tree planting all the students were given a Loblolly Pine seedling to take home and plant so they could watch it grow – just like they will be able

to see this first Arbor Day tree planted at their school grow. The leadership of Lake View Elementary, Principal Kim Walsh, and all the fourth grade teachers Kylie Lane, Barbara McClellan and Heather Miller were

instrumental in the success in the first ever Arbor Day tree planting at their school.



Jamie Smith Honored At Retirement Celebration



Mr. Jamie Smith, who had served over 30 years on the Board of Commissioners for the Dillon Soil and Water Conservation retired from the board in April of 2013.

Jamie not want any accolades or recognition for his years of service to this county in this role, but we could not let this man go away without honoring him, because that is what we are to do—give honor where honor is due!! When he retired he was the Secretary/Treasurer and had recently been recognized at our Joint Conference in Columbia, for his 30 years of distinguished service.

The district usually has their Awards Banquet during December and the board decided this would be the perfect time to "surprise" Jamie by giving him "honor" during this time. The entire night was planned without his knowledge and HE WAS TOTALLY surprised! Among those guests attending was a life-long friend and business associate Mr. Jim McColl, Dennis Mobley and Reginald Hall from NRCS, Marc Cribb—Program Manager Conservation Districts with SC Department of Natural Resources, and Jamie's two sons, Jamie Ray and Rhett Smith of Charleston, SC.

Mr. McColl, shared some stories about Jamie, his work ethics and of course there were some humorous ones too. (We really liked those). The commissioners expressed their deep appreciation for Jamie's service and dedication to Dillon county for the past 30+ years. Jamie received a plaque and a gift card for his years of service. A Powerpoint presentation was given that covered his life both with family, friends and work...It was a beautiful ending to a wonderful evening.

Thank you again Jamie for all you gave!!! Happy Retirement and enjoy those grandbabies!!!



Cover Crop and Soil Health Forum February 18th –2014

Broadcast live from Omaha, Nebraska, this event will feature Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Howard G. Buffet, followed by panel presentations from leading cover crop farmers across the nation.

Following lunch, a forum facilitated by Dr. Robin Kloot, Earth Sciences and Resources Institute (ESRI-SC), will feature a discussion on quantifying the benefits of improved soil health. In addition, you will hear from a panel of local farmers who are sold on the value of cover crops. You don't want to miss this!

Registration begins at 9:15 a.m. and program concludes at 3 p.m. Cost is \$15 for lunch, payable to Clemson University (bring payment to registration—checks only please). You must register to attend by February 11th by contacting Pam Barnhill at pbrnhll@clemson.edu or call 843-662-3526.



Through StrikeForce, NRCS is working with more farmers and ranchers than ever in communities that face persistent poverty. As a result, these producers are seeing their operations become more sustainable while their conservation practices help promote clean air and water, healthy soil, wildlife habitat and resistance to extreme weather events, such as drought.

StrikeForce directs one-on-one conservation assistance to farmers, ranchers and communities in over 400 counties and Indian reservations in 16 states. NRCS partners with landowners in these areas to install conservation practices that protect natural resources and sustain agricultural productivity.

NRCS can help producers prepare a conservation plan to outline their goals for improving the soil, water, plant, air and wildlife habitat on their land. Conservation practices to address these resource concerns, such as fencing, micro-irrigation and cover crops allow producers to enhance soil and water quality while strengthening their operation economically.

NRCS works with state, local, and community groups to increase awareness of the conservation assistance we offer and build participation among farmers and ranchers. Outreach and partnerships helped grow the number of NRCS program applications from underserved producers last year by 82 percent in StrikeForce areas.



Application Deadline Extended to February 15th for Sign up #2

EQIP Program—Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years in length. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland

On-Farm Energy Initiative

Enables the producer to identify ways to conserve energy on the farm through two types of Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) for headquarters and/or for landscape, also known as an on-farm energy audit (headquarters and/or landscape); and by providing financial and technical assistance to help the producer implement various conservation practices recommended in these on-farm energy audits.

Organic Initiative

Provides financial assistance to help implement conservation practices for organic producers and those transitioning to organic to address natural resource concerns.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE AND OTHER PROGRAMS OFFERED THROUGH NRCS, COME INTO THE OFFICE LOCATED AT 1212 COMMERCE DR, DILLON, SC OR CALL 843-774-5122 EXT. 3

DID YOU KNOW??
Soil needs to provide 4,000 gallons of water to grow **one bushel** of corn and 11,000 gallons of water to grow one bushel of wheat.

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Thank You!!!

Without each one of you, the expansion and continuation of programs offered in Dillon County through the Soil & Water Conservation District would not be possible!! "Thank You" seems so inadequate, we hope that you will realize that your giving has touched the lives of others, through educational programs and community projects in Dillon County.

Silver Members ~\$25.00 donation



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Dillon Conservation District Affiliate Membership Application

You can be instrumental in helping conserve Dillon County's natural resources! You can help a student attend a workshop. You can make a difference in educating the public about conserving the abundance of natural resources available in Dillon County – air, water, soil, plants & wildlife.

You can help keep Dillon County a wonderful place to live.

Please help conserve your county's natural resources by becoming an affiliate member of the Dillon Conservation District. We are asking for your financial support to help us accomplish our educational goals, and inform the public about the importance of conserving our natural resource. We are a non-profit organization and your support will be tax deductible.

Programs Presently Sponsored

Essay Contest ~ Open to all Dillon County 5th graders. Helps educate the community on the importance of natural resource stewardship. **This year's theme is "The Living Soil"**

Farm City Day ~ promotes the relationship that exists between farms and urban areas.

Outstanding Student Award – Students nominated by local high schools

Arbor Day ~ Celebrated the first Friday in December with 4th grade students in the county

Outstanding Conservation Farmer ~ recognizes individuals who acknowledge their resource concerns, and are willing to treat those concerns that affect the natural resources of our land.

Poster Contest – Winners will compete in the state competition. State winners will compete in national competition.

*Mail application to:
Dillon Soil & Water Conservation District
PO Box 609, Dillon, SC 29536*

\$25.00 Silver Membership \$50.00 Gold Membership \$75.00 or more Platinum Membership

Name _____

Contact Person (if business or organization) _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____ Amt _____

Dillon County was first included in a Soil Conservation District in 1941. It was then part of the Lower Pee Dee Conservation District which was composed of Dillon, Marion, and Florence Counties. The Dillon Soil and Water Conservation District was organized as a separate District in August of 1951.

The Board of Commissioners is composed of five (5) members. They determine the needs and set priorities for the conservation work in the district. The commissioners serve without pay. Two members are appointed by the SC Department of

Board of Commissioners

Neal Rogers— Appointed Commissioner—Chairman ; **Carl Coleman**—Appointed Commissioner—Secretary/Treasurer **Keith Allen**— Commissioner; **Alan Gaddy**—Commissioner; **Bruce "Sonny" Price, Jr.**—Commissioner; **Mendel "Bud" Smith**— Associate Commissioner