

# The Conservation Corner

Newsletter of the Charleston, S. C. Soil and Water Conservation District

2011 Annual Report



## 2011 Annual Report

### SEWEE TO SANTEE 319 GRANT

**Background:** Since April, 2009, the Charleston Conservation District has been implementing a watershed-based plan to improve water quality in the rural, economically underserved Sewee to Santee area of Northern Charleston County. Funded by the U.S. EPA through the S.C. DHEC, the main goal of the grant is to reduce bacteria levels in the waterways, so that shellfish beds can be reopened for harvesting. Common bacteria sources are failing septic systems, livestock waste, pet waste, and marine sanitary waste discharged from boats. In April, 2012, the grant will be extended another six months and receive an additional \$166,000 in federal funds to bring the full funding (federal and non-federal match) for the now three and a half year project to just over \$800,000.

**Septic Repair Program:** By the end of 2011, the grant had completed two phases of septic repairs/replacements for almost 30 properties. Many of these included the most severe cases of failing systems due to poor soils, high water tables, old, inadequate systems, or user abuse and lack of proper maintenance (sometimes all factors contributed!). All illegal straight pipe discharges of wastewater were reconnected to the new systems. Although not required by regulation, each replacement system was designed and built to meet the current standards to every extent possible. The major limitations to meeting these standards included small lot sizes, close proximity to wells and property lines, and high seasonal water tables. One of the key “fixes” is to put the new septic tanks and drain fields much closer to the ground surface. The local DHEC septic program staff have worked with the District and our contractors every step of the way, making numerous trips to the area for inspections and helping with contractor meetings and homeowner workshops. We are indebted to their assistance for the success of this project! Bids for eleven new systems for Phase 3 were solicited in December and are expected to be completed by May 2012.

**Outreach Efforts:** Two major outreach efforts were accomplished in 2011. The first is the completion of the water quality outreach signage, entitled ***Our Connected Coast***. Four 2 x 3 ft. cantilever signs, based on commissioned artwork, were ordered, delivered, and installed at the McClellanville, Buck Hall, and Garris boat landings, and at the Sewee Visitor & Environmental Education Center. Please stop by these locations and check out our beautiful and educational signs! We also printed various poster sizes of the signs to be used at hiking and canoe trailheads, Awendaw and McClellanville Town Halls, local schools, the Sewee Center, and festivals. Speaking of festivals, in October we hosted a tent at the Awendaw Blue Crab Festival at Camp Sewee. There we demonstrated, to adults and children alike, the effects of nonpoint source pollution on a coastal watershed using an EnviroScope model. We also handed out ***Connected Coast*** posters, grant fliers and other outreach materials, conducted a septic user survey, and held a drawing for a free rain barrel (courtesy of Mt. Pleasant Waterworks) and a free septic tank pump out. Thanks to Commissioners Woolsey and Simpson for helping at this event!

**Success So Far:** In its 2011 annual report to EPA, DHEC reported that they recently reopened 883 acres of shellfish harvesting beds near McClellanville because bacteria levels in the water declined. Through the grant we have replaced almost 20 failing septic systems in the immediate vicinity of the reopened harvesting area. DHEC stated that the reopening is an encouraging sign that the septic tank repairs and replacements, oyster bed replenishing, as well as the educational efforts are paying dividends. With prospects for completing approximately 70 septic repairs, we hope that they will see continued improvements in water quality as we complete our project in October 2012.

#### District Commissioners

William S. Simpson, III—Chairman  
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John P. Kozma

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Debbie Eckard, District Manager  
Lisa Hajjar, 319 Grant Project Leader

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#### Our Mission:

*To preserve and enhance water quality,  
working farms, natural areas,  
and wildlife through locally-led  
conservation efforts*

## SEWEE TO SANTEE 319 GRANT CONTINUED



*Our Connected Coast sign installed at McClellanville Town Hall boat landing next to pier on Jeremy Creek.*



*Before (above) and after (below) pictures showing washing machine line in yard (also discharged under the house) and after new ultrashallow system was installed to treat all household wastewater (site will revegetate).*



*Woolsey and Hajjar demonstrating the EnviroScape coastal watershed model at the Awendaw Blue Crab Festival.*



*Testimonial from recipient of replacement system shown at left:*  
*Mere words can never express my gratitude and appreciation to you and your staff for installing a septic tank system at my home. Calvin Randolph & Co. went above and beyond what most contractors would have done! The time frame for installing my system exceeded what I anticipated, (one and a half days). The system is working just "GREAT". I applied about two (2) years ago and I thought that I was overlooked or forgotten until you called and it was onward from there! May God continue to bless you and your very fine staff in aiding more families in their financial (little) quest in acquiring a much needed, desirable, and dependable septic system. Hat's off to you and your staff. Keep up the great work.*

*Sincerely, Dorothy Steed*

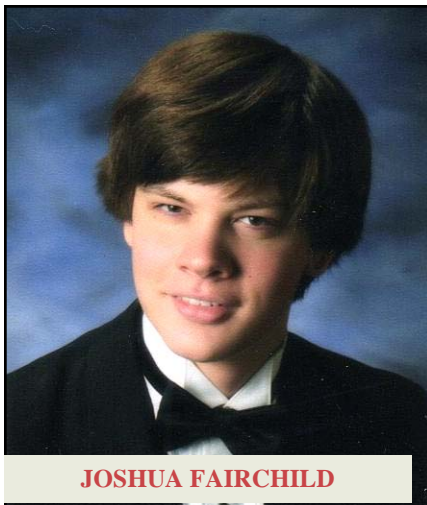


## DISTRICT EDUCATION SPONSORSHIPS

### LANDER INSTITUTE YOUTH WORKSHOP

Wade Alexander and Joshua Fairchild, students at Charleston County School of the Arts, represented the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District at the Youth Workshop held at Lander University in Greenwood, SC. This week long event was held June 27-July 1, 2011. Wade and Joshua joined students from across the state to learn more about conservation. Their week involved a number of tours to study first hand about wildlife, soils, geology, forestry, water quality and natural resource management. This educational and fun workshop provided rising juniors and seniors an opportunity to learn from one another and realize that each one of us can make a difference in the conservation of our natural resources. Shown below are the two students sponsored by the District.

**The District is currently seeking students to sponsor for the June 2012 Lander Youth Workshop. Please contact Debbie at 843-727-4160 x 3 for more information.**



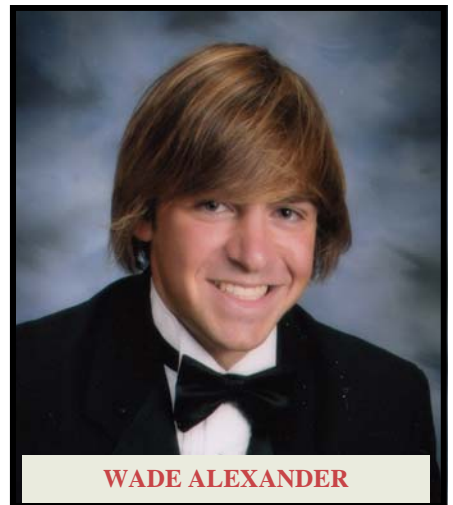
**JOSHUA FAIRCHILD**

Charleston Conservation District proudly sponsored Joshua Fairchild and Wade Alexander for the 2011 Lander Institute Youth Workshop.

Both Josh and Wade attend Charleston County School of the Arts and plan to attend Clemson University after graduation.

Wade will be an Agriculture Major and Josh will be going into the College of Engineering.

We wish both students the best of luck!



**WADE ALEXANDER**

### S.C. ENVIROTHON

The **Envirothon** is a program for high school students to learn more about our natural resources. The Envirothon tests the student's knowledge on topics such as soils, water resources, forestry, wildlife, and a current environmental issue. **This year's team winner was Spartanburg High School.** The national competition was held in New Brunswick, Canada. This team competition is sponsored by the S.C. Association of Conservation Districts, in partnership with Environmental Education Assoc. of SC, SC Conservation Districts Foundation, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, SC Department of Natural Resources, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**The SC Envirothon will be held on May 4, 2012 at the Sandhill Research and Education Center in Northeast Columbia. The District looks forward to sponsoring two teams from Wando High School.**



*Spartanburg High School—2011 Envirothon Team Winners*

*Call Debbie to sign up your team!*

### 2011 LEGISLATIVE DINNER

The SC Association of Conservation Districts held its annual Legislative Dinner at Seawells in Columbia. Representatives from Conservation Districts around the state gathered to recognize Legislators for their efforts in the area of Natural Resource Conservation.



*Sen. Ronnie W. Cromer  
(Left) and  
Rep. Harry L. Ott, Jr.  
(both received the  
SCACD Legislative  
Appreciation Award*



*Shown L-R: Dorchester Commissioner Bobby Long,  
Charleston Commissioner/Chairman Bill Simpson with  
Speaker of the House, Representative Bobby Harrell.*

### CATR FARMS CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

**In 2011, Charleston Area Therapeutic Riding celebrated their 20th anniversary!** For 20 years, CATR students have been strengthening their abilities with the help of skilled instructors and amazing horses! For some it is communicating for the first time, for many it is gaining much needed exercise, and for all, it is experiencing the joy of movement! These major accomplishments together with many small gains like touching the mane or holding the reins for the first time are the heart and soul of CATR and are reflected in all their programs.

Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to hold the Conservation Easement on **CATR Farms**. This easement was signed into place December, 2009. The purpose of this easement is to protect and preserve the Conservation Values; To prevent any use or activity that will impair the Conservation Values; and To allow the continuation of historic and traditional uses and activities as well as limited uses that would not impair or degrade the Conservation Values.

How fortunate we all are to be involved in such a wonderful outreach program as this and at the same time preserving the conservation values that make this property so beautiful to us all! Great Job CATR Farms!



### ASHLEY SCENIC RIVER EVENT

Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District is a member of the Ashley Scenic River Event Advisory Council and a major sponsor of their annual event. This Council was formed in 1999 and was created according to the Scenic Rivers Act to assist and advise the SCDNR in protection and management of the scenic river. The leadership is driven by the local advisory council. This council meets monthly at the Dorchester Library on Dorchester Road. Water quality issues are at the heart of this Council's concerns.



*Ashley Scenic River Event shown above. Local landowners, legislative guests and conservationists in the tri-county area, came to learn more about conservation measures to preserve this historic river.*



**EARTH DAY/ARBOR DAY AT CHARLESTON AFB**

On March 16th over 900 fifth grade students from throughout the Lowcountry area participated in this annual Earth Day/Arbor Day celebration sponsored by Charleston Air Force Base. County-wide fifth graders participated in poster/essay contests and in a tree planting ceremony. The District was one of several participating agencies that presented conservation information to this group. Information on water quality conservation was presented by Debbie Eckard and Associate Commissioner Bill Wilkes.

**SCIENCE FAIR SPONSORSHIP RECIPIENTS**

Each year the Charleston District proudly presents savings bonds to students from all over Charleston County whose projects demonstrate excellence in the Environmental Category of the Lowcountry Hall of Science & Math Science Fair. The District not only presents winning students with savings bonds, but also judges the environmental projects. The students who placed first in the Junior and Senior Divisions of the environmental category were:

**First Place Jr. 1 Division- Maxim Daniel Fisher**

**First Place Jr. 2 Division - Julia Alyce Mabe**

**First Place Senior Division - Sally Hunt**

*See photo on page 11*

**PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE**

On February 28-29, 2012, the 71st Annual SC Partnership Conference was held in Columbia this year at the Downtown Marriott. This annual event highlights the awards and achievements accomplished in conservation throughout the 2011 year. **Our own Marc Cribb, DNR, was honored with a 2012 Merit Award.** Marc has served SC DNR, Conservation Districts, and District Commissioners for many years as an advisor, planner, and organizer of conservation activities, educational projects, and overall supervision, all within the Conservation District Division of the SC DNR.

*Harry Doswell of the  
SC Chapter of the Soil &  
Water Society presents Marc  
with Merit Award.  
Congratulations Marc!*

**SOUTHEASTERN WILDLIFE EXPO**

The annual Southeastern Wildlife Expo was held February 18-20th at Marion Square in downtown Charleston. The District sponsored a booth to display various resources, both education and technical, to Lowcountry citizens interested in conservation of our natural resources. The display highlighted an exhibit that encouraged urban property owners to participate in practices that protect and encourage wildlife habitats. Over 40,000 attendees visited the Conservation area where District/NRCS staff had an opportunity to interact with fellow wildlife conservationists.

**ARBOR DAY AT MARY FORD ELEMENTARY**

The District sponsored **Mary Ford Elementary School** for an Arbor Day event with Fourth Grade Foresters USA. Debbie Eckard dressed up as **“Twiggy the Tree”** and presented each fourth grade student with a tree to plant at home. A short program was given to 100 fourth graders to talk about the value of trees to the environment. Arbor Day is the first Friday in December for South Carolina. It was a great day with Mary Ford Elementary students!

*Call Debbie to hear more!*

**GARDEN CLUBS**

**“Backyard Conservation”** is a program that is available to garden clubs and other civic organizations throughout Charleston County. This program focuses on ways to incorporate **backyard conservation** measures in your yard. Topics such as composting, native species planting, trees, and attracting wildlife to your yard are highlighted. **Programs were presented to Magnolia Garden Club, Camellia Garden Club, and Cokesbury Garden Club.**

*See Photo on page 10*

**SCACD MID-YEAR MEETING**

A Mid-Year Meeting was held October 13th at the Farm Bureau Office in Cayce, SC. There were break-out sessions to discuss District policies and funding options. Those attending from Charleston were Mickey Floyd, Kathy Woolsey and John Kozma. There was good attendance from across the state.

## 2011 POSTER/ ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

### Forests...A TREE-mendous Renewable Resource'



Kindergarten Class– Ms. Terry Hartnett  
Montessori Community School



You may not live in a forest, but you need trees to live! Students learned to acknowledge the benefits of trees to humans and animals.

Trees save energy, attract tourism, provide products, but the best thing about trees is that trees are

**RENEWABLE!**



Kindergarten Class– Ms. Henslee Evans  
Ashley Hall School



First Grade Class –Ms. Julie Hund & Robin Prosisie  
Montessori Community School



Second Grade Class –Ms. Jordane Harvey  
Mary Ford Elementary School



Fifth Grade Essay Winner  
Hannah Blanks  
Hunley Park Elementary School  
Ms. Samantha LaRoche



Fourth Grade Class–Ms. Stephanie Gatton  
Charles Pinckney Elementary School



Eighth Grade Essay Winner– Taylor Jones–  
Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science  
Ms. Katherine Speicher & Mr. Erik Hilden



Third Grade Class– Ms. La'Sheia O. Oubre'  
Sanders-Clyde Elementary School





**2011 Best Conservation Poster**  
First Grade Class Montessori Community School  
Teachers Julie Hund and Robin Prosisie



**2011 Best Conservation Essay**  
Taylor Jones—Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science  
Teacher Erik J. Hilden, ELA



**2011 Conservation Teacher of the Year**  
Ms. La'Sheia O. Oubre' - Sanders-Clyde Elementary School



**2011 Conservation Education Leadership Award**  
Ms. Joan Doran—Hunley Park Elementary School

## 2011 CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR



Robert Brown is a second generation farmer on Edisto Island where he farms 50 acres with his family. They farm specialty crops such as tomatoes, squash, collards, watermelon, and broccoli just to name a few! They market and sell most of their produce at their local stand called George and Pink and also sell at various other markets including Limehouse Produce.

Mr. Brown practices conservation by using crop rotation, nutrient management, pest management, filter strips and has even put in a Seasonal High tunnel system to improve soil and water quality.

Mr. William Simpson, Chairman, shown left presenting award to both Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brown.

## Conservation Planning on Your Farm

### What is Conservation Planning?

Whether it's a large scale farming operation or a small acreage hobby farm, conservation planning is an important — **and voluntary** — first step that owners and operators can take to meet their land management goals. For many producers, conservation planning serves as a fundamental starting point for maintaining and improving the natural resources that support productive and profitable agricultural operations. Every farm has its own unique resource problems or concerns.

At your request, conservation planners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and local conservation districts can provide planning assistance to help producers identify options that provide the greatest conservation benefit while meeting production goals.

### Benefits of developing a customized conservation plan for your farm:

- Identifies immediate or potential resource problems that could hinder your production.
- Helps you comply with environmental regulations.
- Is required for you to qualify for most USDA NRCS Farm Bill conservation programs.
- Adapts to your changing operational goals.
- Establishes a reasonable schedule for you to apply needed conservation practices.
- Can save you time, labor and energy.



*NRCS Agronomist Gordon Mikell and DC Angel Sams begin conservation planning with local farmer.*

### What's Included in Your Plan?

- Your objectives and goals
- Aerial photographs
- Soils maps and soils descriptions
- Resource inventory and analysis data, which may include:
  - Forage or crop production potential
  - Forage-livestock balance calculations
  - Soil erosion calculations or estimates
  - Wildlife habitat assessments
  - Agricultural waste management assessment- and many more
- Conservation plan alternatives for solving identified resource concerns
- Documentation of your decision
- Tools, such as job sheets, to help you successfully implement your decisions
- A schedule for applying conservation practices



*NRCS works with local growers and landowners to address various resource concerns.*



## The Roadmap to Farm Bill Conservation

A conservation plan is required for you to qualify for most USDA NRCS Farm Bill Programs in South Carolina. Your plan will serve as a roadmap to a variety of technical and financial assistance available to you from your local USDA Service Center.

Once you and the conservation planner have evaluated all of your conservation options, you may choose to seek technical or financial assistance. Your plan will help you identify the types of assistance options available to you that will best address your conservation and operational goals.

### A Conservation System

The combination of different treatments that work together to address the overall natural resource needs on a farm is called a conservation system.

**Conservation systems are sets of land treatments that, when properly planned and applied, work in tandem to provide the greatest overall conservation and production benefits. When designing an overall conservation system, land managers must consider all of the resources and activities on the land.**

Depending on the operation, your farm may benefit from a simple conservation system or a combination of different systems to meet all of your natural resource needs and operational goals. This will depend on the landscape, resource concerns, type of operation, and landowner objectives.

NRCS employees will present to you alternative conservation systems to meet your unique objectives and resource concerns.

### Options...

As you develop a conservation plan and/or conservation system that is right for your land, you will consider a number of options. Below are some examples of individual practices that could be incorporated into your plan to help you reach the natural resource goals and objectives you have identified within your plan.

*Conservation Cover Crops, Crop Residue Management, Crop Rotation, Field Borders, Filter Strips, Grassed Waterway, Grazing Management, Nutrient Management, Pest Management, Forest Management, Irrigation Water Management, Buffers, Streambank Protection, Riparian Buffers, Wetland Enhancement/ Restoration, Sediment Control, Wildlife Upland Habitat, and more...*

When selecting conservation measures you and the planner will carefully consider how each treatment will function with the unique characteristics, land uses, and additional conservation treatments in place on your property.

### Voluntary Technical And Financial Assistance

Once you have evaluated all of your conservation options, you may choose to seek technical or financial assistance. NRCS works with a growing conservation partnership offering a variety of technical and financial assistance to help you implement your conservation plan. This partnership includes local, private, state and federal entities.

NRCS Farm Bill programs are voluntary. Talk with your local NRCS Field Staff to learn more about programs and which types of assistance will work best to help reach the goals outlined within your conservation plan.

### Learn More...

To learn More about USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), conservation planning, eligibility, and technical and financial assistance, contact Angel Sams with the Charleston USDA NRCS Field Office by calling **(843-727-4160 Ext. 108)** today and schedule an appointment to speak to her.

You can also visit us on the Web at [www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov).

# THE YEAR



*Earth Day at Charleston AFB –Associate Commissioner Bill Wilkes gives Water Quality Program to Charleston County 5th graders. Over 800 attended this event.*



*Sander's-Clyde Elem. School Student shows off his certificate!*



*Sewee-Santee 2011 Site Visit with EPA, DHEC, District Commissioners and Grant Manager discussing new septic system with homeowner.*



*Cokesbury Garden Club was presented a program on "Backyard Conservation."  
Commissioner Kathy Woolsey shown holding flowers.*



*Riverland Garden Club was presented a program on Backyard Conservation as it relates to water quality issues.*



*Magnolia Garden Club was presented a program on "Backyard Conservation."*



*Camellia Garden Club was presented a program on Backyard Conservation as it relates to water quality.*



*District's ongoing Dune Restoration Project at Sullivan's Island*



*Randy Fowler, NRCS Soil Scientist and District Staff teaches a soils class to students at Trident Technical College.*



# IN PICTURES

PAGE 11



*Angel Sams, NRCS District Conservationist and William Simpson, Chairman, shown with science fair student. The District awards Savings Bonds to Conservation winners.*



*Arbor Day Program given by "Twiggy the Tree!" Students received seedlings to take home and plant!*



*2011 Legislative Dinner- Shown above is Charleston District Chairman William Simpson, Representative Joseph H. Jefferson and Berkeley District Commissioner Diane Edwards.*



*Debbie Eckard shown giving an agriculture program to Burns Elementary School on "Where Food Comes From". Clean water issues are related to food quality.*



*Liz Colby, USDA Civil Engineer shown surveying stream crossing.*



*Charleston District Board Honors Steve Edwards The District thanked Steve Edwards for his years of service to NRCS and especially to the Charleston District. Thanks Steve and enjoy your retirement!*

*The Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District would like to thank our County, State, and Federal Partners and 2011 Affiliate Members for your ongoing financial and technical support. Your gift helps us to educate the public about natural resource conservation. THANK YOU!*

**CONTRIBUTING**

Babbie Mangum  
Benjamin A. Hagood  
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**Total Affiliate Memberships—121**

Government Partners—3

Advertising—10

Sustaining Memberships—32

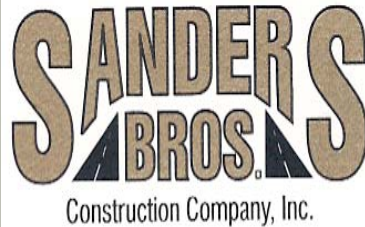
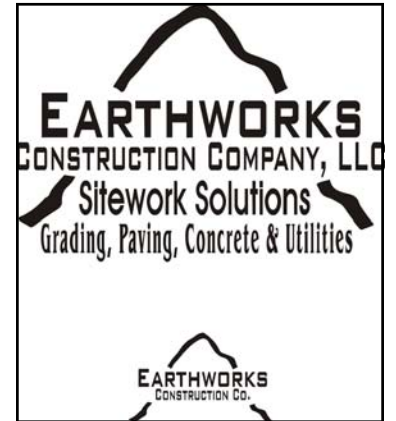
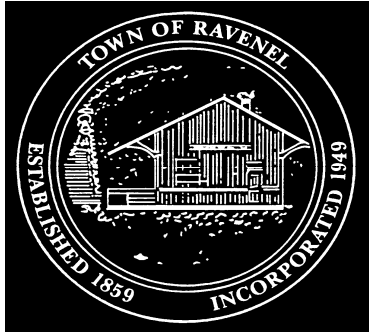
Associate Memberships—31

Contributing—48



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- Corporate Sponsorship—\$1000 or above
- Advertising Membership—\$250 or above
- Sustaining Membership \$100
- Associate Membership—\$50
- Contributing \$25



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# 2011 Charleston Soil & Water Annual Report

## CHARLESTON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2070 Northbrook Blvd., Ste. A-8  
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**Charleston Conservation District**

The Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District meets  
the Second Tuesday of each month, 3:30 PM at  
2070 Northbrook Blvd., Ste. A-8, North Charleston, SC .

**Our meetings are open to the public!**

*The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

### **2011 Commissioners**

William S. Simpson, III, Chairman  
Raymond L. Tumbleston – Vice-Chair, Treasurer  
Kathy Woolsey  
Mickey Floyd  
John P. Kozma

### **Associate Commissioners**

John H. Smoak  
Brian Celek  
Barbara Neale  
William D. Wilkes

### **Commissioner Emeritus**

W. C. Geraty  
William C. Kennerty  
Van Noy Thornhill

### **District Staff**

Debbie Eckard, District Manager &  
Education Coordinator  
Lisa Hajjar, Sewee/Santee Grant Project Leader

### **USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff**

Angel Sams, District Conservationist  
Ann Bentley, Soil Conservation Technician  
Randy Fowler, Resource Soil Scientist  
Liz Colby, Resource Civil Engineer