e Conservation Corner

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

2013 Annual Report



**Charleston Conservation District** 

District Commissioners William S. Simpson, III—Chairman John H. Smoak—Vice-Chair M.F. "Mickey" Floyd—Treasurer John P. Kozma Kathy Woolsey

#### <u>Associate Commissioners</u>

Hal Hanvey Brian Celek Barbara Neale

#### Emeritus Commissioners

W.C. Gearty William C. Kennerty Raymond L. Tumbleston

<u>Staff</u> Debbie Eckard, District Manager Lisa Hajjar, 319 Grant Project Manager

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#### Our Mission:

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

## 2013 Annual Report

# CHARLESTON SOIL & WATER DISTRICT WINS 2013 CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF THE YEAR !



Front Row L-R: William S. Simpson–Chairman; Debbie Eckard -District Manager, John Smoak -Vice Chairman; and Lisa Hajjar–Grant Project Manager

Second Row: John Kozma—Commissioner; Diane Leone—Supervisory District Conservationist and Commissioner Mickey Floyd—Treasurer

Not shown: Kathy Woolsey—Commissioner



## WE WON!

Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District was honored by being chosen and awarded the **2013 Conservation District of the Year** at the annual State Partnership Conference, February 25, 2014. The conference was held at the downtown Marriott Hotel in Columbia, SC.

This is a "coveted" award that Districts from across the state of South Carolina look forward to winning! There are 46 Districts in the state of South Carolina and every year, a winning District is selected as that year's BEST!

Charleston District was honored at an Award's Luncheon and proudly accepted the traveling "PUMP" award, along with the plaque of previous awardees to which our District name will be added, and last but not least a monetary award.

Charleston Conservation District is proud to accept this prestigious award and we would like to thank the State Selection Committee for choosing us this year! Thank you to all partners and affiliate members for your support this past year that allowed us to achieve this honor!



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

2013 Annual Report

# **2013 DISTRICT MEMORIAL LEGACIES**

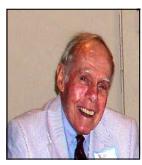
#### VAN NOY THORNHILL-1923-2013



**Van Noy Thornhill**, Commissioner with the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District, passed away on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013. During his life he worked in his family's oil business and volunteered to serve his country in the Army while still a sophomore at Clemson. After the war, in 1948, he graduated from Clemson College with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Following in his father's footsteps, Mr. Thornhill came on board as a Commissioner of the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District in February of 1970. He served on our board as Vice Chair/Treasurer for 34 years until his retirement in 2004. During his time with the District, Mr. Thornhill was honored in the year 2000 by the State Association of Conservation as the **"Outstanding Commissioner of the Year."** Although there were numerous organizations that Van Noy Thornhill served on, his passion was clearly his beloved Midway

Plantation and conservation of our natural resources. Mr. Thornhill was given a life-time Emeritus Commissioner status for his years of dedication and commitment to conservation.

#### WILLIAM D. WILKES-1927-2013



William D. Wilkes (Bill), Associate Commissioner with the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District, passed away on Friday, August 2, 2013. Mr. Wilkes was a graduate of Porter Military Academy and a 1949 graduate of The Citadel, He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII, then started his 37 year career with Koppers Company. As an Earth Team Volunteer enthusiast (part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Service), Mr. Wilkes coordinated the Adopt-A-Dune and Build-A-Dune Restoration Projects which addressed barrier island erosion following damage done by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Working with local and county groups and leaders for over 15 years, he inspired hundreds of other volunteers to join the Earth Team Family to help rebuild the dunes that protect the fragile barrier islands of Coastal South Carolina, including Sullivan's Island. These projects literally

saved Sullivan's Island, because of the millions of dollars that the barrier island generates in tourism dollars. 15 years, three local newspapers came to cover the event. Again In 2007 Mr. Wilkes was honored with a national award for his volunteer service as **"Earth Team Volunteer of the Year"** by NRCS. All together, he devoted 17 plus years to conservation work. Along with his passion for the Dunes, Bill Wilkes was also active in the District education outreach programs. During the years he coordinated many Earth Day events along with other conservation programs.



T.

Bill Wilkes was a true leader and conservationist whose spirit, enthusiasm, energy and commitment made a difference in his later years also!

Left Bill Wilkes, and Right Van Noy Thornhill,

Both Commissioners Van Noy Thornill and Bill Wilkes leave behind conservation legacies that will remembered for years to come.

## 2013 Conservationist of the Year

### Maria Baldwin of "Our Local Foods" was selected as Conservationist of the Year for 2013.

The Charleston Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was established in 1943 for the purpose of promoting the conservation and protection of our precious natural resources here in Charleston County. Our mission cannot be accomplished by our efforts alone, but rather through the cooperation and enthusiasm of individuals and organizations sharing our resource concerns. Each year we recognize those who have given of their time and efforts to ensure that future generations will enjoy the natural blessings of our lowcountry environment.

The District, together with our conservation partner, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), have been privileged to work with Maria Baldwin of our Local Foods, who farms 10 acres of organic vegetables and manages 42 acres of rotational grazing for livestock including conservation practices below:

- Over 10,000 ft. of permanent fencing and 6,000 ft. of a pipeline watering system for a 42 acre animal farm were installed to keep livestock out of streams and to facilitate Rotational Grazing.
- Nutrient and Pest Management Practices



Maria Baldwin, Our Local Foods 2013 Conservationist of the Year

Shown Left: Angel Sams, USDA/NRCS; Bill Simpson, Chairman, Maria Baldwin, Our Local Foods, Lisa Hajjar, 319 Grant Manager, Ann Bentley, USDA/NRCS and Debbie Eckard, District Manager

## **2013 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. About 300 people attended the event and a nice dinner was enjoyed by all.

#### **Legislative Appreciation Awards:**

The SCACD honored Representative Nelson Hardwick and Senator Larry Grooms with Legislative Appreciation Awards for their support of Conservation Districts in South Carolina. Congratulation to both!





Rep. Nelson L. Hardwick



Right, Commissioner Mickey Floyd congratulates Senator Larry Grooms on his award. Senator Grooms of District 37, resides in Charleston.

# **319 TOOGOODOO CREEK WATERSHED GRANT**

## 319 GRANT – TOOGOODOO CREEK WATERSHED (Hollywood, Meggett Areas)

Following the success of the Sewee to Santee 319 Grant, the District was awarded a \$600,000+ competitive 319 Grant for the twenty-six acre Toogoodoo Creek Watershed project area that includes parts of Hollywood, Meggett, and unincorporated Charleston County. The Toogoodoo Creek Watershed is impaired due to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria and all of its shellfish beds are closed to direct harvesting. Since starting in January 2013, the District has focused on developing community partnerships, identifying problematic areas with poorly functioning septic systems, locating cooperative landowners with animal farms in close proximity to the three main creeks in the watershed, and developing an outreach and education campaign aimed at school groups and the community at large.

While most of the on-the-ground improvements are expected to occur in the second year of the grant, the District to date accomplished the following:

- introduced the grant's goals and objectives to Hollywood and Meggett town councils;
- ongoing efforts to assess citizen awareness of their local watershed by administering a survey at festivals and at both town halls;
- entered survey respondents in a drawing to win a free septic tank pumpout;
- completed one septic tank pumpout and inspection for the first survey drawing winner;
- designed and had made 600 "Can the Grease" plastic can lids to give out to survey respondents using either septic or sewer in order to reduce the amount of grease that goes down the drain and clogs sewer and septic lines;
- demonstrated an EnviroScape coastal watershed model and distributed grant posters and septic outreach materials at festivals;
- worked with grant partners to identify bacterial sources including animal operations, septic and sewer lines, and identify where best to implement practices to show improvements in water quality; convened stakeholder meetings to plan project implementation;
- mailed over 100 letters and applications to residents to participate in a septic system renovation program; held two application workshops;
- initiated oyster recycling and oyster bed planting efforts in conjunction with the County and SC DNR; and chosen by SC DHEC to participate in a fecal bacteria source monitoring project so improvements in water quality due to BMP implementation can be documented.



Toogoodoo Creek Watershed Project Working With Landowners To Improve Water Quality

#### Grant Quick Facts

<ul> <li>This 3-year grant project is being run by the</li> </ul>	•Se
Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District,	yo
with many local and regional partners.	50,
<ul> <li>The main goal of the grant is to improve water</li> </ul>	har
quality in the Toogoodoo and Swinton Creeks, by	or
reducing bacteria levels, so shellfish beds can be	•A
reopened for harvesting.	dir
•Septic systems and animal wastes are the main	pa
sources of bacteria in the waterways besides	as
wildlife.	•0
<ul> <li>Best Management Practices will be used to</li> </ul>	ne
reduce bacteria sources from septic systems and	im
animal operations.	eff
Participation is totally voluntary. Community	•Le
participation is vital to the project's success.	sch
•Outreach and education is a key part of the	in
grant.	vol
0.111	

# How Can We Help You? • Septic Systems – Are you having problems with

- our septic system and do you own your home? If o, please sign up to receive an application form to ave your system evaluated and possibly repaired r replaced at little or no cost to you. Animal Farms – If you have cows or horses with lirect access to creeks or streams, we can help to ay for fencing and provide clean drinking water, s needed, for the animals. Oyster Bed Restoration – Volunteer to help plant lew oyster beds in your watershed to help
- improve water quality. SC DNR will coordinate this effort. •Let us know if we can speak to your church, school, or civic group about environmental issues in your watershed. Let us know if you can
- volunteer too! •Call 843-727-4160, x. 3 for assistance, for more information, or to volunteer.





Our grant started with a free septic pump out for the first drawing survey winner.

## **DISTRICT EDUCATION SPONSORSHIPS**

### LANDER INSTITUTE YOUTH WORKSHOP

Every year the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District sponsors two students for the Youth Workshop held at Lander University in Greenwood, SC. Since 1967, students have been coming to this event to learn about conservation and the environment up close and hands on for a week, all while gaining multiple rewards. Tangible rewards include possible college scholarships. Over \$80,000 in college scholarships have been awarded during this time. The workshop is structured such that teams of students are assigned an adult counselor who works with them for the entire week.

Areas of study encompass wildlife and wildlife management, soils and geology, forestry, water quality management, and natural resource management technology. The Charleston Conservation District proudly sponsors students from Charleston County School each year to attend this great workshop.



. Please contact Debbie at 843-727-4160 x 3 for more information on environmental sponsored programs.

## **S.C. ENVIROTHON**

Held outdoors, the **Envirothon** is a dynamic environmental competition for high school students which cultivates a passion for environmental science and conservation policy by testing in the areas of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a topic that varies from year to year. **The 2013 concentration** 

#### was Rangeland Management.

Eighteen teams from across the state participated in this year's Envirothon with **Spartanburg High School Team A** taking First Place with the top combined score. Spartanburg A also took home top honors in four of the five topic areas and in the Orals Presentation. Each student on the First Place team received a \$500 college scholarship.

**Spartanburg Day School Team A** won second place and those students received a \$250 college scholarship. Third place honors were captured by **Dorman High School**, with each student receiving a \$125 scholarship.

If you are interested in lending your support to this program, or learning more about it, please contact Debbie at **debbie.eckard@sc.nacdnet.net** or visit the SC DNR website at : **www.dnr.sc.gov/education/Envirothon** 

This is a great opportunity for students to get together learn about Conservation!



Shown above: 2013 Envirothon students from across South Carolina in an outdoor classroom setting.

#### ANNUAL EASEMENT REVIEW AT CATR FARMS

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.

Bill Simpson, Chairman, John Smoak, Vice Chairman, and Debbie Eckard, District Manager, met with Amanda Gerald, Community Relations Director, to review the easement conservation guidelines. After a thorough review of the property, all was found to be in order!

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! Riding lessons are available!



2013 Annual Easement Review Commissioners Bill Simpson and John Smoak shown above accessing the easement property with Amanda Gerald, Community Relations Director

#### CHARLESTON COUNTY EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

Charleston County hosted it's annual Earthday Festival on April 20, 2013 at Riverfront Park. This event focuses on environmental Stormwater and water quality management practices. Over 5000 people attended the festival with over 73 organizations exhibited. This festival gave all exhibitors the opportunity to engage and educate our community on environmental challenges and successes! A coastal watershed model called the enviroscape was setup for kids of all ages to have a hands-on learning experience about our watershed. Handouts were available to all on septic care, how to keep your water clean handouts, along with plenty of fun for students who took the time to learn more about water quality and our watershed. Thanks to all who volunteered to make this day a fun day of learning for all who stopped by our District Booth!





Shown Above: Commissioner John Kozma assists an inquisitive student with the Enviroscape watershed model to demonstrate how stormwater runoff pollutes the surrounding waterways in our local area.

Shown Left: Commissioner Mickey Floyd, Debbie Eckard, District Manager, and Commissioner John Kozma after setup of the District's Display.

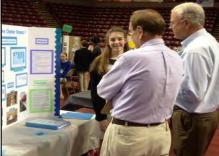
#### ASHLEY SCENIC RIVER COUNCIL

Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District is a member of the Ashley Scenic River Event Advisory Council and a major sponsor of their annual events. 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. 2013 was spent planning ahead for an outdoor Festival to be held at Oakbrook Landing in Summerville. Focus will be on bringing more attention to the care of the Ashley Scenic River in this area.

#### SCIENCE FAIR SPONSORSHIP RECIPENTS

Each year the Charleston District proudly sponsors students from all over Charleston County whose projects demonstrate excellence in the Environmental Category of the Lowcountry Hall of Science & Math Science Fair.

Commissioners from our board serve on the judges team and select the best projects that fall into the Environmental Earth Science Area Category.



Commissioners Bill Simpson, Chairman, and Mickey Floyd, Treasurer, shown judging a student's science fair project.

#### PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

On February 25-26, 2014, the 72nd Annual SC Partnership Conference was held in Columbia at the Downtown Marriott. This annual event highlights the awards and achievements accomplished in conservation throughout the 2013 year. As mentioned on our newsletter cover page, Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District was selected as "2013 Outstanding Conservation District of the Year!"

#### Other "Outstanding" recognitions included:

Outstanding Conservation District - Charleston SWCD Outstanding Commissioner - English Warren Dixon - Horry SWCD Outstanding District Employee - Chanda Cooper - Richland Teacher of the Year (K-6) Melinda Beach-Richland SWCD Teacher of the Year (7-12) - Robert Behr-Dorchester SWCD

#### SOUTHEASTERN WILDLIFE EXPO

The annual Southeastern Wildlife Expo was held February 15-17th 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 35,000 attendees visited the Conservation area where District/NRCS staff had an opportunity to interact with fellow wildlife conservationists.

#### ARBOR DAY PROGRAMS

The District sponsored two schools, **Nativity School** and James Island Elementary, 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 about 125 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 Nativity School and James Island Elementary School students! Plant a Tree!

#### **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, pollinators, and attracting wildlife to your yard are highlighted.

**Commissioner Kathy Woolsey, Horticulturalist** at Cypress Gardens, presented "**Native Pollinators**" programs to Magnolia Garden Club in January and to SC Garden Clubs District Meeting in Manning, SC in March. A program was also presented on "Backyard Wildlife Habitat" to Edgewater Park Garden Club this past year. Call the District if you want to know more about our programs.



Shown Left: Native Bee Houses.

## **2013 POSTER/ ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS**

# <u>"WHERE DOES YOUR WATER SHED?</u>



Kindergarten Poster Winners- Montessori Community School



Third Grade Poster Winners—Sanders-Clyde Elementary School Teachers Ms. La'Sheia Oubre' and Ms. Katrina Roman



Second Grade Poster Winners-Montessori Community School



5th Grade Essay Winner -Trinity Avery Teacher Tracy Thornley– Cape Romain Environ. Education Charter



Jamiell Lagnitao -5th Grade Essay Hunley Park Elementary School Teacher, Ms. Jessica Collins



Carmen Barfield-6th Grade Essay St. Paul's Academy Teacher– Ms. June Lowry



Brooke Fletcher-7th Grade Essay Coastal Christian Prep School Teacher—Ms. Charlene Morgan



Jonathan Fuerte-8th Grade Essay Jerry Zucker Middle School Teacher—Mr. Erik J. Hilden, ELA

## **TOP RANKS IN EDUCATION!**

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2013 Best Conservation Poster Kindergarten Class , Montessori Community School Teacher—Ms. Terry Hartnett



2013 Most Creative Poster Award -Sanders Clyde Elem. 3rd Grade Special Area Class— L-R: Ms. Roman, Bill Simpson, Ms. Oubre' and Debbie Eckard



2013 Best Conservation Essay—Brooke Fletcher, 7th Grader at Coastal Christian Preparatory Charter School Teacher—Ms. Charlene Morgan

#### **AWARDS RECOGNITION DINNER**

Each year the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District hosts an Environmental Conservation Recognition Awards Dinner to honor the top educators conservationists in Charleston County.

It is a pleasure to honor our local educators, farmers-landowners who have a passion for the preservation of our natural resources.

Your school can also be a conservationist. Our education programs on can be seen at our new website. Check us out!

www.charlestonconservationdistrict.com



2013 Conservation Teacher of the Year Erik Hilden, ELA—Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science

## 2013 CONSERVATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Erik hails from the Pacific Northwest with all its beautiful mountain ranges, deep valleys and beautiful scenery giving Erik a great appreciation for the environment and conservation. Although Erik has had many careers, the best part of all those jobs, those careers, those experiences, was teaching students. Hilden credits his students for giving him a real sense of purpose. He earned a Masters of Arts in Education Technology from Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA; a Master of Arts in Teaching from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon; a Bachelor of Arts/Liberal Arts focus on Audio Engineering and Systems Design from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and a Professional Certificate in Electronic Publishing from the University of Oregon. Erik has taught for 5 years at Zucker Middle School of Science where he teaches 8th Grade English Language Arts. Congratulations Erik!

## 2013 NRCS ANNUAL REPORT – CHARLESTON

The Charleston SWCD and the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service provided \$38,056.28 to Charleston County landowners last year to install the following conservation practices. These practices protect water quality, improve soil health and protect habitat for endangered wildlife.

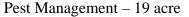
Tree/Shrub Site Prep - 129 acres

Cover Crop - 18.2 acres

Nutrient Management – 21.4 acres

Brush Management - 115 acres

Tree/Shrub Establishment – 79 acres Prescribe Burning – 51 acres



Pipeline – 920 feet

Conservation Cover - 6 acres



PRESCRIBED BURNING



PEST MANAGEMENT – TALLOW CONTROL USING HACK & SQUIRT METHOD



PIPELINE INSTALLATION



CONSERVATION COVER FOR POLLINATORS

## NATURAL RESOURCES

# The District said farewell to Angel Sams, District Conservationist, as she plans to relocate to Virginia in early 2014. Best Wishes Angel!



# THE YEAR



Students at Montessori Community School Students tell parents about their Watershed Poster



319 Toogoodoo Grant Back to School Education Outreach



2013 Award's Recognition Dinner Guests and Awardees enjoying the District's Lowcountry Boil!



Oath of Office - Commissioners John Smoak and Mickey Floyd Oath Administered by SC DNR Marc Cribb



Lisa Hajjar, Grant Project Manager, shows Toogoodoo Creek Watershed Map Boundaries to locals in Hollywood



Commissioner Raymond L. Tumbleston is appointed a life time Emeritus Commissioner status after serving on the main board for 25 years.

# IN PICTURES



2013 Awards Recognition Dinner

L-R: Commissioners John Smoak, Vice-chairman and Mickey Floyd, Treasurer, preparing the Lowcountry Boil!



Arbor Day Program given by "Twiggy the Tree!" Nativity School

Students received seedlings to take home and plant!



2013 South Eastern Wildlife Exposition The District's Booth provides educational information on Water Quality and our natural resources for adults and children



Arbor Day at James Island Elementary School



Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District receives the coveted 2013 CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF THE YEAR AWARD. Shown above is Bill Simpson, Chairman, accepting the award with District Commissioners, Staff, and Partners at the Awards Luncheon. Go Charleston!



Honk for Conservation!

# **2013 AFFILIATE MEMBERS**

The Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District would like to thank our County, State, and Federal Partners and 2013 Affiliate Members for your ongoing financial and technical support. Your gift helps us to educate the public about natural resource conservation. THANK YOU!

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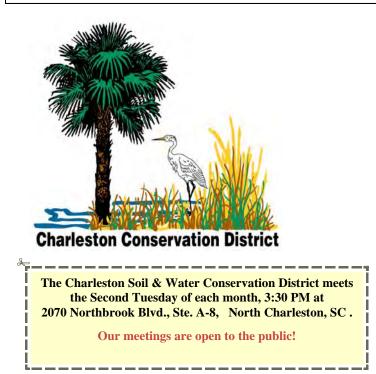
Toll Free 800 - 476-3758

### CHARLESTON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2070 Northbrook Blvd., Ste. A-8 North Charleston, SC 29406-9253



# PLEASE HELP US CONSERVE! Receive your newsletter by email.Call Debbie at 843-727-4541 x 3 to update or send your email address to:clease address to:clea



The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

2013 Commissioners

William S. Simpson, III, Chairman John H. Smoak – Vice Chair Mickey Floyd—Treasurer John P. Kozma Kathy Woolsey

> Associate Commissioners Hal Hanvey Brian Celek Barbara Neale

> Commissioner Emeritus W. C. Geraty William C. Kennerty Raymond L. Tumbleston

**District Staff** Debbie Eckard, District Manager & Education Coordinator Lisa Hajjar, Grant Project Manager

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff Angel Sams, District Conservationist Ann Bentley, Soil Conservation Technician Randy Fowler, Resource Soil Scientist