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

2014 Annual Report



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

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Thank you for another great year!	

Our Mission:

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

2014 Annual Report

2014 General Election Results for Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District Board

The General Election was held on November 4, 2014. Charleston Conservation District had two positions up for election. The results of the Commissioner elections were Kathy Woolsey (re-elected), and Ford Walpole (a new electee), who will officially take their oath of office in January of 2015.

An overview, and opportunities associated with a District Commissioner position are:

A district commissioner is an appointed or nonpartisan elected member of the governing body of a Conservation District. The conservation district is managed by a five member board. Conservation District Commissioners are non-salaried officials that **serve 4-year terms** and volunteer countless hours promoting soil and water conservation in Charleston County.

In taking the Oath of Office, a commissioner commits to exercising the rights and responsibilities of duties as spelled out in the Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law, 48-9 of the South Carolina Code of Laws. This law charges Conservation Districts Commissioners with the responsibility of providing first-line leadership in developing and implementing plans to meet conservation needs.

Duties of a Conservation District Commissioner are not limited to: Be familiar with the state law, Identify conservation needs and assist with the planning to address these needs. Determine funding needs and find sources of funds to meet the conservation needs. Keep the public informed of conservation programs. Stay abreast of conservation issues and promote natural resource management. Evaluate Natural Resource Management Programs. Plan and direct conservation programs, Assign priorities to resource development and gather information on natural resource issues. Through partnerships with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), technical, administrative, and financial assistance is provided through the conservation districts.

Time Required:

Attend 12 regularly scheduled district board meetings per year, additional events of the conservation district, SC Association of Conservation Districts, State and Federal conservation agencies.

Salary

This is a voluntary position without pay.

We have a great board who devotes many volunteer hours to the mission of the District. 2014 elected Commissioners, Kathy Woolsey and Ford Walpole, will be freatured in the 2015 Annual Report.

Rosebank Farms - 2014 Conservationist of the Year!

Sidi Limehouse, along with Louise Bennett, Gretchen Hayes and other hard working folks, were honored as our 2014 Conservationist of the Year. Semi-organic crops are grown on 150 acres on Johns Island and marketed in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. CSA members receive a weekly share of fresh produce from the farm. Rosebank's produce stand is located on Betsy Kerrison Blvd. and the farm proudly shares their bounty at the Rosebank Farms Café! Conservation is practiced daily on this farm including but not limited to: *Crop Rotation, Nutrient Management, Integrated Pest Management, Field Buffers of native pollinator plants and Seasonal High Tunnel*. Rosebank Farm donates land to "Dirt Works Farm" which is a unique incubator farm organized to help new and beginning farmers learn to grow food with donations of land, equipment and infrastructure.

Sidi and Louise are very active in environmental fundraising events to protect wild places in their community with their recent efforts toward the preservation of Cap'N Sam's Inlet on the Kiawah River. Congratulations to Rosebank Farms for their conservation contributions to our community!



Louise Bennett and Sidi Limehouse of Rosebank Farms shown receiving "The 2014 Conservationist of the Year Award" from Chairman Bill Simpson



Annual S.C. Conservation Partnership Conference—Award's Luncheon

The Annual Partnership Conference was held at the downtown Marriott Hotel, Tuesday, Feb. 24-24, 2015. Districts and partnering agencies come together to discuss conservation programs and other outreach in their Districts. This year's conference theme was the "International Year of the Soil." Presentations on soil health farming for the 21st century was just one of the many great presentations given at the conference. The Award's Luncheon recognizes outstanding

conservation achievements for 2014. Lancaster Soil & Water Conservation District was awarded the "2014 Outstanding Conservation District." As past winners, Charleston District passed on the traveling pump award to Lancaster District to be displayed at their office. Charleston Conservation District was presented a plaque to replace the traveling "Pump award." The partnership conference was attended by about 350 conservationists from across the State of SC.

An Annual Auction was held during the conference. Districts across the state donated unique items from their area to help raise money. Charleston District is an ongoing sponsor.





L-R: John Smoak, Vice Chairman, Lori Bataller, NRCS; Debbie Eckard, District Manager; Bill Simpson, Chairman; Commissioners Mickey Floyd and Ford Walpole (Newly elected), accept 2013 Outstanding Conservation District Plaque to replace the traveling "Pump" award.

319 TOOGOODOO CREEK WATERSHED GRANT

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

Last year was a busy Year 2 for implementation of our Grant project in the Toogoodoo Creek Watershed. Many thanks are due to the work and support of our grant partners: the towns of Hollywood and Meggett, Charleston County, BCD-COG, NRCS, SCDNR, TTC St. Paul's Parish Campus, Clemson Extension, Rural Mission, and our grant sponsor SCDHEC. Our District Commissioners have been very hands-on as well. The overall goal of the grant is to improve the water quality in the Toogoodoo Creek Watershed by reducing bacterial inputs, so that shellfish beds may be reopened to harvesting. The main areas of focus include failing septic systems, oyster reef restoration, outreach education, and livestock management for improved water quality.

During 2014, the District accomplished the following activities and best practices:

- Replaced 30 failing septic systems using a bid process and three licensed contractors (A-1 Septic, B2 Unlimited, and Knights Septic) on behalf of the homeowners who had applied. By this summer, 7 more systems will be replaced. Used the Ultrashallow System design a great improvement over the mostly 30+ year old systems that had long ceased to effectively treat wastewater. No more back-ups in the home or yard for many satisfied homeowners! Educated over 30 residents on proper operation and maintenance in septic homeowner education workshops as a prerequisite for receiving new septic systems.
- Developed a "Can the Grease" campaign with 600 custom can lid covers and informational postcards as a way for homeowners to keep grease out of their septic systems and sewer lines.
- Installed a new oyster reef in Toogoodoo Creek as directed by SCDNR SCORE staff and with District, community, grant partner, and family volunteers. Oyster shells were first bagged in March to "cure" before the June installation. Once mature, the reef will filter thousands of gallons of water each hour!
- Outreach to area schools with EnviroScape model demonstrations, and a poster and essay contest on "Where Does Your Water Shed?"
- Promoted the Grant at Hollywood's Spring Festival, SEWE, Earth Day, and to Hollywood Town Council.
- Purchased an *Our Connected Coast* sign for installation by the Town of Meggett at their beautiful new Roxbury Park; visitors will learn how human activities at home and on the water can impact water quality.
- Initiated efforts to enlist landowners with livestock to participate in a cost-share agreement to install fencing for keeping animals out of the watershed creeks. With plans for an Agricultural Workshop with Clemson Extension and NRCS, we hope to make this happen this summer. Contact us if you know anyone who might be interested they won't be disappointed!



Left, Mr. Simpson enjoyed meeting a satisfied homeowner with his new septic system.

Right, A tired but happy crew after building an oyster reef in Toogoodoo Creek!

Below: Commissioner John Kozma shoveling oyster shells.









"WHERE DOES YOUR WATER SHED?

TOOGOODOO CREEK WATERSHED POSTER & ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

As part of our grant outreach, a Watershed Poster and Essay Contest was held for the schools in the Toogoodoo Watershed (Towns of Hollywood and Meggett). The outreach included demonstrations using our Coastal Watershed Model, along with a Watershed poster and essay Contest. Essay winners won \$25.00 along with a certificate of award. The teacher of the Winning poster class was presented with a desk trophy, along with \$25.00 to be spent on their class.

Below are Watershed Winners from Lowcountry Leadership Charter School in Hollywood, SC.









9th Grader, Christian Savage, wins Best Watershed Essay at LLCS. Teacher, June Lowry

8th Grade Essay Winner, Savannah Corbin was not present for the award. Her essay was the best in the 8th grade division of the Watershed contest.



Right: Lisa Hajjar, Grant Project Manager, gives a watershed model demonstration to students at Lowcountry Leadership Charter School.



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 2014 concentration was Sustainable Agriculture.**

This year 20 teams from across the state participated in this year's Envirothon with **Spartanburg Day School Team A** taking First Place with the top combined score. Spartanburg Day also took home top honors in the Wildlife, Sustainable Agriculture and Orals Presentation. Each student on the First Place team received a \$500 college scholarship.

Spartanburg High School Team A won second place and those students received a \$250 college scholarship. Third place honors were captured by **Dorman High School, Team A**, with each student receiving a \$125 scholarship. **This is a great opportunity for students to get together to learn about Conservation! Charleston District is happy to sponsor High School Teams for this wonderful event.**

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.**



The Envirothon provides over \$85,000 in scholarships to local high school students!

Charleston Hosts 2014 Edisto-Savannah Area Meeting

The Charleston Soil and Water Conservation District hosted the Edisto-Savannah Area Meeting in Charleston on Thursday, April 24th. The event was held at the USDA Vegetable Lab on Hwy 17. This is an annual meeting that allows partners and Districts to give reports on programs and outreach in their agencies. The meeting was called to order by Chairman, William S. Simpson, III. Agency reports along with County District reports were given for all to hear and compare pros and cons about their programs and outreach in their areas. Partners that were represented included our Federal Partner, Dennis Mobley, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist of Operations; State Partner, Marc Cribb, (SCDNR); Conservation Districts Program Manager, Kenny Mullins SCACD Vice-President; Johnny Haralson, Edisto Savannah Area Director; Sterling Sadler-Past SCACD President, and Diane Edwards/Treasurer. Partnering agencies updated the Districts with their program and financial reports that relate to Districts, such as Farm Bill, Funding Appropriations and agency priorities. After a wonderful catered lunch provided by Stono Market/Tomato Shed Café, a Clemson Organic Research Tour was given by Clemson Research Specialists: Dr. Brain Ward, Dr. Richard Hassell, Professor of Horticulture/ State Vegetable Specialist, and Hal Hanvey, Associate Commissioner of the Charleston District and Farm Manager/Certified Crop Advisor for Clemson. About 45 were in attendance and a great day was had by all!



NRCs Asst. State Conservationist, Dennis Mobley, gives the Federal Update



Marc Cribb, SCDNR Districts Program Manager, gave the updated State Report

See Snapshots below of meeting and tour





Yummy BBQ Pulled Pork, Baked Chicken, Tomato Pie, were some of the great dishes catered by Stono Market, LLC.

CHARLESTON COUNTY EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

Charleston County hosted it's annual Earthday Festival on Saturday, April 26, 2014 at Riverfront Park. This Year's Theme was "Protect Our Planet, Conserve Resources." The festival is a hands-on science-based interactive experience, designed to encourage participants of all ages to develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues. Earth Day was established in 1970 and is now celebrated by a half-billion people around the world. This event focuses on environmental Stormwater and water quality management practices. The District set up a coastal watershed model called the Enviroscape 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!



Commissioner Mickey Floyd gives a hands-on water quality Enviroscape Model Demonstration that teaches students about the watershed that they live and the pollutants that are washed into our waters.

ASHLEY SCENIC RIVER COUNCIL

Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District is a member of the Ashley Scenic River Advisory Council and a co-sponsor of previous annual events. This Council was formed in 1999 and was created according to the Scenic River Act to assist and advise the SCDNR in protection and management of the scenic river. The leadership is driven by the local advisory council. Council meetings are monthly at the Dorchester Library on Dorchester Road. Water Quality issues and storm water runoff are at the heart of the Council's concerns. Focus is always to bring more attention to the care and restoration of the Ashley Scenic River. Plans are in the making for a River Fest in the Oakbrook Area. Let's keep our Ashley River clean!

SCIENCE FAIR SPONSORSHIP RECIPENTS

Each year the Charleston District is invited to serve as judges for the Lowcountry Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Eligible students in grades 5-12 compete for national. regional, and local awards, as well as the opportunity to advance to other competitions. Charleston Conserva- Chairman, Bill Simpson, and tion District has been a local Commissioner Mickey judges student's projects that student's Environmental Project.



sponsor for several years and Treasurer, shown judging a

fall into "The Earth and Sciences Environmental Category."

District Awards are given out to top winners in the Junior & Senior Divisions. Charleston District is an ongoing sponsor of this outreach!

LEGISLATIVE DINNER

The SC Association of Conservation Districts held its annual Legislative Dinner, February 24th at Seawell's in combination with the Partnership Conference Columbia. Charleston District along with other representatives from Conservation Districts around the state gathered to recognize Legislators for their efforts in the area of Natural Resource Conservation. About 350 people attended the event. Legislators were also able to speak to Districts about their concerns and budget needs to lobby for their continued conservation programs and outreach needed in our counties.

Legislative Appreciation Awards were presented to **Senator Thomas Alexander and** Representative Mike Pits

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 educational and technical, to Lowcountry citizens interested in the conservation of our natural resources. This year's display was a Pollinator exhibit that encouraged local conservationists to learn the benefits of pollinators for plants and crops. Pollinator posters, along with many other education handouts were given to interested folks. Assistance was given to those interested in Farm cost-share opportunities by NRCS. This is a great educational outreach venue each year!

ARBOR DAY PROGRAMS

The District sponsored Harborview Elementary School on James Island, December 5th, 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 135 fourth graders that focused on the importance of trees to our environment. Arbor Day is always the first Friday in December for South Carolina. It was a great day with Harborview Elementary School fourth grade students! Plant a Tree! See Twiggy page 11.

CATR FARMS EASEMENT REVIEW

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.

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. If you are interested in scheduling a program, you can contact Debbie at 843-727-4160 x 3.

2014 POSTER/ ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS (County wide)

'DIG DEEPER: Mysteries in the Soil"







Poster Winners Montessori Community School

L-R: Ms. Terry Hartnett's Kindergarten Class—1st Grade Class-Ms. Amy Pontiff & Robin Prosise—And Ms. Dee Dee's 2nd Grade Class



Ms. Laura Graham's 3rd Grade Class Mount Pleasant Academy



Ms. Laura Graham's 4th Grade Class Mount Pleasant Academy



Mr. Adam Sherrill's 4th Grade Class Hunley Park Elementary School

ESSAY WINNERS



Marion Bell -5th Grade Hunley Park Elementary School Teacher, Ms. McCulloch



Deandrea Taylor (not shown) - 7th Grade West Ashley Middle School Teacher, Mr. Kyle Smalls accepts award



Elizabeth Perez - 8th Grade Winner Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science Teacher, Mr. Mr. Erik J. Hilden

2014 CONSERVATION RECOGNITION AWARD'S DINNER



2014 Best Conservation "Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil" Poster Winner Teacher, Robin Prosise, accepts award for Montessori Community School



2014 Best Conservation "Watershed" Poster Winner Teacher, Stephanie Johnson, LLCS



2014 "Most Creative Soil's Poster Award" Mount Pleasant Academy Teacher, Laura Graham, LLCS



2014 Best "Soils" Essay Award
7th Grade Student, Deandrea Taylor
Teacher, Kyle Smalls
West Ashley Middle School
Deandrea reads her winning essay on
Soils for all to hear!

2014 Best "Watershed" Essay Winner

9th Grader, Christian Savage, (Not shown)

Lowcountry Leadership Charter School



AWARDS RECOGNITION DINNER

Each year the Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District hosts an Environmental Conservation Recognition Awards Dinner to honor the top educators and 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 can be seen at our website. Check us out!

www.charlestonconservationdistrict.com

2014 Environmental Science Fair Winners





The District is one of the Annual Environmental Sponsors of the Lowcountry Math and Science Fair. A small scholarship is awarded to top winners. Left- Brett Widholm, Springfield Elementary School, Junior 1 Division Winner Right—Gelsey Jaymes, Porter Gaud School, Junior 2 Division Winner

2014 Conservation Teacher of the Year



June Lowry, Lowcountry Leadership Charter School Hollywood, SC

CHARLESTON DISTRICT WELCOMES LORI BATALLER NEW NRCS CHARLESTON/BERKELEY DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

Lori Bataller, is currently serving as the District Conservationist in the North Charleston field office. She began the position on June 2, 2014. Lori has a degree in Natural Resources Management from Central Carolina and completed her education with courses at Oregon State University. Lori started working with NRCS 22 years ago as a part-time employee. She moved to Chesterfield County, SC, and worked as a Soil Conservation Technician for eight years. Lori has recently been working in the Bishopville Field Office, in Lee County, for the past 15 years serving the Wateree Watershed first as a District Conservationist then more recently as the Supervisory District Conservationist which included Sumter, Clarendon, Richland, Calhoun, and Lee Counties.



Nick and Lori Bataller

She is very excited to call Charleston home and is living on John's Island with her husband of 34 years.

2014 NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REPORT



NRCS Review Team visits Charleston USDA Office

Charleston County had a field office review of all work done in the past few years. The review team came to the field office on July 22 & 23, 2014. They reviewed the past work of the office and field staff. During the review Kathy Woolsey meet with the State Conservationist for Operations, to discuss Conservation District Operations.

The review went well and the team was impressed with the work that took place with the previous District Conservationist, Angel Sams, and the present staff including Ann Bentley, Randy Fowler, and Debbie Eckard.

Lori Bataller spoke at several Outreach events including a few Low County Local First meetings to provide information about Conservation plans and easements. She also attended two Outreach Meetings with the Center for Heirs Property Preservation, at these meetings she discussed eligibility requirements for conservation programs and provided an overview of conservation program and activities. Attendance at these meetings increased applications for the 2015 program year.

Contracts awarded to farm participants, include the Conservation Stewardship Program with over \$175,000, over the next five years provided to applicants. The contracts were generally associated with Forestry Practices but did include some items to help improve wildlife and pollinator habitat.

Also, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program provided over \$16,500 for cost-share assistance Forestry. The practices to be installed are forestry related for replanting of cutover timberland.

THE YEAR



Left, Lisa Hajjar, Grant Project Manager, organized the District/DNR Oyster Bagging evemt.



2014 Edisto Savannah Area Meeting in Charleston Clemson Tour of Organic Farm Fields



Students at Montessori Community School presented certificates for their participation in the District's poster contest!



Education Outreach in the Toogoodoo Watershed Lisa Hajjar and Commissioner John Kozma



Ashley Cooper Stormwater Education Consortium Meeting Charleston SWCD is an educational partner



319 EPA Site Visit in the Toogoodoo Watershed DHEC team from Columbia was taken to a homeowner's home to see Septic Contractor, B2 Unlimited and son, repairing a failing Homeowner septic tank in Hollywood.

IN PICTURES



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



2014 South Eastern Wildlife Exposition The District's Booth provides educational information on Water Quality and our natural resources for adults and children. John Smoak, Commissioner, points out District materials.



Science Fair Student shows off his environmental project!



Arbor Day at Harborview Elementary School! Fourth grade students are given a tree to take home to plant!



NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, Ann Bentley, provides conservation planning assistance to landowners



The beauty of a Charleston sunset!

2014 AFFILIATE MEMBERS

The Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District would like to thank our County, State, and Federal Partners and 2014 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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Government Partners–3
Advertising–14
Sustaining Memberships–35
Associate Memberships–25
Contributing–34

Affiliate Membership Levels:

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Corporate Sponsorship—\$500 or above

Advertising Membership—\$250-\$499

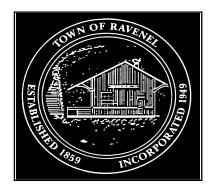
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2014 Charleston Soil & Water Annual Report

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: debbie.eckard@sc.nacdnet.net

Check out our new website:! www.charlestonconservationdistrict.com



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.

2014 Commissioners

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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

Lori Bataller, District Conservationist Ann Bentley, Soil Conservation Technician Randy Fowler, Resource Soil Scientist