

Sewee to Santee

The Charleston Conservation District “the District” was busy during the first year of their 3 year grant. The District concentrated on a septic repair program to underserved homeowners in the project area with severe septic concerns during this first phase of the grant. Project partners, including municipal and county officials, non-profits, and state and federal staff, convened a Wastewater Committee to make decisions concerning the septic component of the grant and develop a plan to ensure proper long term management of the funded systems in low-lying areas with high water tables.

The septic Committee ranked over 120 applicants based on severity of problem. Working with the SC Dept. of Health local on-site wastewater team, the grantees are in process of installing nine above ground systems (mound), two ultrashallow systems, and four additional repairs. A second round of 17 homeowners for repair and/or replacement systems were selected and inspected. Also homeowners also attended one of three homeowner workshops designed to provide outreach and education on proper septic care.

The District agricultural partners, USDA/NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) and Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) also met this year for planning and outreach strategy to address the bacteria issue with area hobby farmers. Partners conducted field work to identify problem areas, and put on an agricultural workshop that featured information on cost-share opportunities and how and why to install best management practices on the land (BMPs).

Additionally, Project partners spent over 100 hours with volunteers installing shell at Tibwin Reef and in other project areas. The District conducted boater surveys to learn about attitudes and knowledge of marine sanitary waste and shellfish recycling. Project partners met and collaborated with local marina, boat landings, and water quality specialists to develop a targeted message for a water quality kiosk, designed by an artist. A partnership effort also met with representatives from a local marina and staff of The Clean Vessel Program to install a pumpout station. Estimates were drawn up and installation is forthcoming.



First Year Site Visit held September 2010. Committee looks at septic installation site. Project partners site visit attendees included: EPA, SC DHEC, Dept. of Natural Resources, Charleston Soil & Water Conservation District, Charleston Resource Conservation and Development, and SC Coastal Conservation League.



Tibwin Creek Restoration Site.

OUR CONNECTED COAST

FROM YOUR HOME AND LAWN TO OUR WATERWAYS

1 Retain Your Rain
Consider using porous surfaces such as gravel in lieu of pavement. Use a rain barrel to capture and re-use rain water. Slowing stormwater flow helps absorb and filter pollutants before they enter our waterways.

2 Sustain Your Septic
Have your septic tank inspected and pumped every 3-5 years. Never flush or dump toxic waste into household toilets and drains. Improperly cared for septic systems can leak harmful bacteria into surface and groundwater.

3 Scoop the Poop
Pick up after your pets. Use proper waste storage for farm animals and keep them out of waterways. Do not feed wildlife such as geese, ducks, and raccoons. Animal waste near waters can create high bacteria levels and pose a health risk.

4 Limit Your Lawn
Reduce the size of your maintained lawn to minimize the need for watering, fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides. These products can be deadly to aquatic plants and animals. Compost your yard and grass trimmings.

5 Plant Natives
Install native plants throughout your landscape. Natives require less water, filter pollutants, stabilize your land, and can increase property value. A minimum 50'-150' planted waterfront buffer with selected clearing is recommended.

6 Save Your Shells
Take your discarded oyster shells to a nearby oyster shell recycling center. Oyster larvae need a hard surface, ideally another oyster, to attach and grow. A single adult oyster can filter up to 2.5 gallons of water per hour, improving water quality.

7 Pump, Don't Dump
It is illegal to discharge untreated human waste from your boat into state waters. This waste is harmful to humans and animals. Use an on-board marine sanitation device (MSD) and dispose of it at a pump station onshore.

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Marine Pumpout and Signage Art Display



An Agricultural Workshop on Water Quality and Animal Waste Management for Small Operations was held at the Sewee Educational Center in Awendaw, October 28, 2010. Local Landowners were presented a power point presentation on conservation Best Management Practices available from USDA/NRCS professionals such as Angel Sams, USDA/NRCS shown in the picture talking to the workshop attendees.