

Richland Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

March 2007

803-576-2080



Constructed Wetland in Augusta



Three Commissioners and staff toured the facility in Georgia and found it to be truly remarkable. The constructed wetland is located on 650 acres (the wetlands takes up only 1/2 if this acreage) which was previously an old farm. We were impressed with the beauty of the location and the fact that there was absolutely no odor at all. The construction of the wetlands was fairly simple but it is a sophisticated living mechanism and needs to have scientific research personnel involved in the management. Twelve 30 acre cells are in place and filter the waste water in lieu of a waste water treatment plant. The technology is sound and the wetlands should be able to operate indefinitely.

2007 SCACD Legislative Reception and Dinner



The Legislative Reception and Dinner was a success this year and Richland County was represented by John L. Scott and Jimmy Bales pictured on the left and Associate Commissioners, Mary Ann Hoffman and Jeff Laney pictured on the right. This was an excellent opportunity for anyone interested in natural resource conservation to talk with their legislators.



New Farmer's Market
To open at Clemson's
Sandhill Research
And Educational Center
starting in May



The Sandhill Farmers Market will open each Tuesday afternoon, from 3:30-7:30 pm, starting on May 1st and continuing through November. The market is located in the red barn at Clemson's Sandhill Research and Education Center at 900 Clemson Rd, Columbia, SC.

The purpose of the market is to promote local agriculture by providing a place where the local farmer can sell, allowing the non-agricultural community to interact with agriculture, and implementing environmental and agricultural-based educational activities during the market.

Farmers have been recruited from around the midlands. Vendors will sell nursery, produce, and livestock items. All vendors are required to personally grow a certain percentage of the items that they sell. In addition to being local and fresh, much of the food is organically and humanely grown. Come out and enjoy and support local agriculture and other events that will make for a fulfilling afternoon. For more information and to register for a weekly e-newsletter, please visit www.clemson.edu/sandhill. Click on "Farmers Market Page" under program areas.

Giles Creek Watershed Concerns



County Administrator Milton Pope met with the Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Commissioners to discuss issues regarding the conservation of our natural resources in rural and urban areas of Richland County. Conservation Districts are charged by State Law to identify local conservation needs, and develop, implement and evaluate programs to meet them. Of specific concern is the Gills Creek Watershed. Mr. Pope has formed a committee of interested individuals, local, state and federal agencies to help identify critical concerns in the Gills Creek Watershed develop a restoration plan and seek a means of implementing that plan. The Conservation District will be an integral partner in that process. Mr. Pope requested the District to provide him any information on best management practices that can help strengthen and improve water quality in all phases of development in Richland County.



Annual Maintenance Inspection of Flood Prevention Channels: Carlton Hayden and Ernie Hightower of Richland County Public Works Dept. with LaKeisha Hill, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Hugh Caldwell, Richland Conservation District, recently inspected over twenty miles of channels for the Cabin Branch, Eastover, and Gadsden Flood Prevention Projects

Inspection of Drainage Channels

In the mid 1980's thru early 1990's Richland Conservation District in partnership with Richland County, Richland County Public Works Dept., Town of Eastover, Gadsden and Hopkins Communities, East Piedmont Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service assessed the flooding of low areas and the need for preventing flooding and improving the drainage. By the mid-1990's twenty plus miles of channels were constructed to help alleviate the water concerns. These channels are maintained annually to assure their functionality. The maintenance right-of-way roads are kept in travelable condition with the vegetation mowed. Sediment deposits are removed from the ditches as needed and dead and fallen trees and debris are removed.

One of the major maintenance items is the removal of household garbage, building materials, clothes items and appliances that people choose to dump in the channels. This reduces the capacity of the water flow in the channel. The residents of these areas can help by discouraging the dumping of materials in the channels and on maintenance right-of-ways. The anti-littering laws of South Carolina also apply to these easement right-of-ways. For further information contact the Richland Conservation District Office at 803-576-2080.

Lower Richland Ruritan Meeting



Lakeisha Hill, left, Soil Conservationist with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) discusses assistance available to Richland County land users with the Lower Richland Ruritan Club. Mr. John Cotton, Ruritan Club member, invited Ms. Hill and Hugh Caldwell of the Richland Conservation District to speak on Conservation assistance available in Richland County.



Commissioner Re-elected

Reverend Lewis Gunter is originally from Lexington County and graduated from Benedict College with a B.S. degree in Sociology. Reverend Gunter, a full time Pastor at Gunter's Chapel Baptist Church, here in Columbia, has worked with the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District for the past seven years. He has served as Chaplain and currently is Vice Chairman of the District Board. Reverend Gunter also serves on the USDA Farm Service Agency Board as the Minority Advisor for Richland and Calhoun Counties. After retiring from the U.S. Postal Service, he started farming in the Hopkins area. Reverend Gunter and his wife Lue E. Gunter reside in Columbia.

Reverend Gunter says "I ran for District Commissioner because of the strong beliefs that I have in conserving, protecting, and enhancing the soil and water of Richland County. My goal is to help design and implement conservation programs that will help conserve our natural resources for years to come."



SC Institute for Natural Resource Conservation at Lander University

The SC Institute for Natural Resources Conservation will be held June 25 through June 29 this year at Lander University. Applications are now being accepted from students currently in grades 11 or 12 through the Richland Conservation District. The workshop has been taken to a new level with significant changes in the agenda and in the level of instruction. Participants who successfully complete this Workshop will receive one hour of college credit. Instructional strategies focus heavily on experimental, hands-on learning. Instructional time is organized in such a manner as to be predominantly outside of a traditional classroom setting. Field and laboratory studies are now a featured aspect of the curriculum. If you know of a students who would be interested in this Workshop, please contact Education Coordinator, Mary Jane Henderson at 803-576-2083.

What Programs Am I Eligible For?

By Doug Deaderick

I get asked this question often. If the person asking doesn't have a whole farm conservation plan, I can't answer this question.

What is a conservation plan? It is a process where I meet you on your land, walk or drive over the land with you while we discuss your goals related to the natural resources - the soil, water, air, plants and animals on your property. Together we decide what you want to do to stop soil erosion, improve soil quality, improve crop production, manage pastures and hay, improve wildlife, provide a better source of drinking water for animals, manage animal manure as organic fertilizer, improve timber, and much more. These decisions are recorded in a folder for you to keep. This folder contains a record of your decisions plus aerial photographs, soil maps and descriptions, and other supporting documents. This plan guides you to those financial programs that might help you solve your natural resource concerns.

How do I get a conservation plan? Call us at (803) 359-3165 ext 3 and one of us will make an appointment to come visit you.



Pond Management and Fertilization

You can enjoy good fishing for years if you follow a sound pond-management program. Building the pond properly, stocking the correct species at recommended rates, having a good fertilization program, and controlling weeds are steps in the right direction. This article concentrates on fertilization, assuming your pond is weed free and the water quality is good.

Begin fertilization in the spring when water temperatures have stabilized at 60°F or higher. As a rule of thumb, this means about March 15 - April 1. Fertilizer stimulates growth of microscopic plants, called phytoplankton. Phytoplankton form the base of the food chain and are eaten by small animal organisms, which serve as food for bream, which in turn are eaten by bass. Phytoplankton make the water turn green, or "bloom," which also shades the bottom and discourages growth of troublesome aquatic weeds. Proper fertilization can significantly increase the total weight of fish produced in a pond.

Several methods and types of fertilization programs can be used, and all can be effective. Granular fertilizers (20-20-5 formulation) at the rate of 40 pounds per surface acre, are most commonly used effectively in South Carolina. Liquid fertilizer (10-34-0) at a rate of 1.5 gals per acre may also be used.

If you use liquid or traditional granular formulations, make the first three applications of fertilizer two weeks apart; then make additional applications whenever you can see your hand clearly with your arm under water at elbow depth. By fertilizing only when water clarity increases to 18-24 inches, you will fertilize the pond at approximate 3-to 5-week intervals from spring through September.

If you use granular the form, apply it in a way that minimizes fertilizer-soil contact. This can be accomplished by constructing fertilizer platforms -- one for each 5 to 6 acres of water. Build the platform so it can be raised or lowered. Lay the required amount of fertilizer on the platforms so 4 inches of water will cover them. Tear off the top layer of each sack. Wave action will distribute the fertilizer throughout the pond.

Platform construction can be difficult in existing ponds. An alternative method is simply to place bags containing the needed amount of fertilizer in shallow water with the tops cut out. The bags serve to separate soil and fertilizer, and wave action will dissolve and distribute the fertilizer.

For further information on pond fertilization, contact the Conservation Office at 803-576-2082



Thank you 2006 Affiliates!

Thank you so much for your past support of our Affiliate Membership Program. Because of the contributions of many supporters like you, this past year we were able to strengthen and perform many important conservation education activities for Richland County in 2006. We are truly thankful for the patronage of those of you who invest in our Conservation District and have supported us year after year.

Susan Brill
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G.R.P. Walker, Middlefield Farm
Eugene (Red) Weed, Irmo Grading
Harold Wessinger
Thomas M. Williams
Frances Wilson
Jim Wilson

Announcing the 2007 Earth Day Contests

Our Earth Day Contests are open to all Richland County schools, public and private, and also home school students. In keeping with our Soil Stewardship Program's theme for this year the contests will be on the topic of energy. The due date for all contest entries is April 23rd. Contests are as follows:

- Earth Day Poster Contest: Grades K – 5, and Special Education
Theme: Where Is Energy
- Earth Day Essay Contest: Grades 6 – 8,
Theme: Energy Conservation ~ Fuels for the Future
- Earth Day Photography Contest: Grades 9 – 12
Theme: What is Energy?



Winners will receive certificates and cash prizes to be presented at our annual Awards Banquet in May. For rules and more information please call our office at 576-2080 or 576-2083.

Affiliate Members are a vital part of our conservation team. Without the monetary support given from Affiliates, we would not be able to carry out the many programs to promote "Conservation Stewardship" within the county. The Conservation District is committed to helping educate the students and landowners of Richland County. Become an affiliate member by sending this slip to:

**Richland Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204**

I would like to become an Individual/Corporate sponsor of The Richland Conservation District

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate Basic Membership | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Affiliate Member | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Affiliate Member | \$125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Affiliate Member | \$200 or more |

Name _____

Address _____

City, St., Zip _____

Your contribution is tax deductible

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Heath Hill
Hemphill Pride, III
Rev. Cathy Jamieson-Ogg, Chaplain

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Jeff Laney
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District Staff

Hugh Caldwell, District Manager
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant
Mary Jane Henderson, Education Coordinator
Doug Deaderick, District Conservationist, NRCS
LaKeisha Hill, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Ricky Walker, Civil Engineer Tech. NRCS, Ft. Jackson
Joy Sullivan, Program Coordinator, DNR

PLEASE NOTE

The Richland Conservation District Commissioner's Board Meeting will be the second Monday of each month at Lizard's Thicket, 402 Beltline Blvd., Columbia, SC. Each meeting begins at 6:30 PM. The public is cordially invited to attend. For information call 803-576-2080 or email fisherc@rcgov.us

The USDA prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age and disability.