

Environmental Planning Division Reorganization and Staff Changes

Richland County has formed a new Environmental Planning Division to support programs of the Planning and Developmental Services Department, the Richland County Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) and the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC). The Division's responsibilities include providing environmental and conservation expertise in support of the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Strategic Plan, and Neighborhood Master Plans. In addition, the Division will continue providing technical and educational staff support to the numerous programs of the RSWCD and the RCCC including agricultural soil and water conservation, conservation easements, historical restoration, greenways and trails, mitigation banking, and watershed and water quality protection projects.

Dr. James B. Atkins (Buddy) joined the Environmental Planning staff in December 2010 as Manager of the Environmental Planning Division. He fills the vacant position of Hugh Caldwell who formerly worked with the US Department of Agriculture and served as RSWCD Conservationist for the past decade. Buddy brings 35 years of experience to the position and formerly served as a Commissioner on the SC Public Service Commission, was a Research Professor at USC (Earth Sciences & Resources Institute), an Extension Specialist at NC State University (Agricultural Engineering Dept.). Buddy holds a Ph.D. in Marine Science/Oceanography from USC and an MS. in Environmental Systems Engineering from Clemson.

The Richland County Environmental Planning Division is also pleased to announce that Ms. Nancy Stone-Collum has been hired (effective March 7, 2011) as the Division's Conservation Coordinator. Nancy will be assuming the responsibilities of Jim Wilson who retired last month after 40 years of service to the USDA and Richland County. Nancy earned a M.P.H degree from USC and brings over 25 years of conservation and historic preservation experience to the position. She was formerly the Deputy Director of the Palmetto Conservation Foundation.

In addition, Mary Jane Henderson has announced her retirement effective March 2011. Mary Jane has worked as the RSWCD Education Specialist for almost 28 years, and has received both regional and national recognition for her work in conservation education. The Division will be advertising the position in the coming weeks and hopes to have a new Educational Specialist in-place by April 2011.

Charlene (Charlie) Fisher will remain as the Division's Administrative Assistant. Charlie has worked with the RSWCD and the RCCC since April 2005. Charlie not only provides invaluable administrative support to the Division, but is an avid conservationist and serves on the East Piedmont Resource Conservation and Development Council.

For more information regarding the Division, please contact us at:

Environmental Planning Division

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