

Summer 2013



Photo by Michelle Johnson

Richland Soil and Water Conservation District

WWW.RCGOV.US/RSWCD



Dreher High School Student Represents Richland County, Wins Scholarship



Dreher High School senior Joseph Duffield is passionate about issues involving food access, social justice, and environmental reform.

Joseph represented Richland County at the 2013 Conservation Districts Youth Workshop held at Lander University in June and was awarded a \$500 college scholarship by the SC Soil and Water Conservation Society for his outstanding performance on workshop assessments.

"Environmental issues have always been a part of the background for my generation, but they didn't sink deeply until I took AP Biology with an awesome teacher [Ms. Judi Ray, Dreher High School]," Joseph says. A

voracious reader, he points to the wisdom of the conservation message in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*: "people can't get too far away from their food source, from the land, without losing something," he says.

Joseph loves music and plays several instruments, enjoys writing, and participates in the Latin Club and Mock Trial at Dreher. He looks forward to competing in the Envirothon next spring and is eager to pursue a broad course of study in college, combining his interests in the humanities and the sciences by double-majoring. He also plans to pursue a law degree.

The SC Conservation Districts Youth Workshop is a cooperative project of the 46 Conservation Districts of SC, the SC Association of Conservation Districts, Lander University, the SC Conservation Districts Foundation, and the SC Department of Natural Resources. Since its inception in 1967, over \$80,000 in college scholarships have been awarded during camp week.

Students interested in participating in the 2014 Youth Workshop should contact their local Conservation District for sponsorship.

Contact Us

Richland Soil and Water Conservation District
2020 Hampton St., Room 3063 A
Columbia, SC 29204
www.rcgov.us/rswcd



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NRCS: Helping People Help the Land



Ajoa Harris,
District
Conservationist
Richland and Calhoun Counties

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps America's farmers and ranchers conserve the Nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment. Farmers and landowners can sign up for conservation cost-share programs

throughout the year, but funding selection times are TBA. It is especially important for producers to submit their applications as soon as possible to be eligible for limited funding. Through the agency's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), there are several funding initiative programs:

Organic Initiative: helps producers install conservation practices on certified organic operations or those working toward organic certification.

Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative: helps producers install high tunnels designed to

extend the growing season into the cold months, increase productivity, keep plants at a steady temperature and conserve water and energy.

Longleaf Pine Initiative: offers both technical and financial assistance to help landowners improve habitat on agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest and Tribal land, with conservation practices including planting longleaf pine, installing firebreaks, conducting prescribed burning and controlling invasive plants.

On-Farm Energy Initiative: helps producers conserve energy in their operations.

If you are interested in Farm Bill programs, conservation technical assistance, or want to simply discuss conservation measures you would like to implement on your land, NRCS is here to help. Your District Conservationist can help you identify conservation practices and develop a conservation plan. The District Conservationist for Richland and Calhoun Counties is:

Ajoa Harris
904 F R Huff Drive Ste. 104
St. Matthews, SC 29135
(803)874-3337 ext. 105
ajoa.harris@sc.usda.gov

Twenty-five Mile Creek W

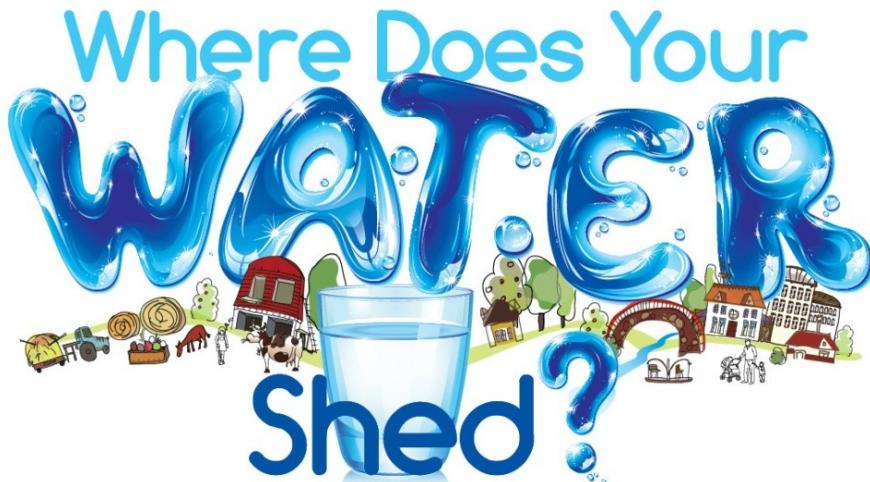
Partners in Richland, Fairfield, and Kershaw Counties are developing a watershed-based plan for the Twenty-five Mile Creek Watershed which includes portions of the three counties (see map at left). The Creek contains high levels of fecal coliform bacteria and has an impaired macro-invertebrate community (see page 3).

Several brainstorming sessions and two public meetings have been held to gather citizens' input on the issues and discuss solutions. The plan is set to be completed in 2013, and the partners will then apply for funding to implement the plan and take corrective action to improve water quality in the watershed.



2013 Conservation District Poster Contest

Open to Richland County K-12 Students



Submission
Deadline:
August 15



Poster Contest
Entry Form

We all live in a **watershed**—an area that drains to a common waterway, such as a stream, river, lake, estuary, wetland, aquifer, or even the ocean. Within a watershed, all the rain, hail, sleet, or snow that falls eventually flows to the same water body. The water may travel over land as surface water or underground as groundwater. Many small watersheds make up larger watersheds. The water moves from stream to river and eventually flows into the ocean.

Homes, businesses, cities, roads, farms, and forests lie within watersheds. Watersheds are affected by people; when we pollute, we damage the watershed and reduce water quality. When we conserve water, prevent pollution, and take actions to clean up our waterways, we improve the watershed and water quality. Do you know where water sheds, or goes, in your community?

We invite Richland County K-12 students to create a poster titled

“Where Does Your Water Shed?”
The poster should tell the story of our watersheds and should impart a conservation message.

Winners will receive cash prizes, and the County winner will compete in the State competition. The submission deadline is August 15. Complete rules and an entry form are available online at www.rcgov.us/rswcd. For more information, contact (803) 576-2080.

Watershed Planning



Mayfly nymph



Dragonfly larva



Water scorpion



Diving beetle



Mosquito larva

Q: What's an impaired macro-invertebrate community?

A: Macro-invertebrates are small, spineless organisms such as insect larvae and snails. Many macro-invertebrates are aquatic, and some of these creatures are very sensitive to environmental disturbances and cannot survive in polluted (or impaired) waterways. Other species are more tolerant of changes in their environment and may be able to survive even when water quality is poor. A healthy macro-invertebrate community contains both sensitive and tolerant species; an impaired community contains more tolerant species and fewer sensitive species. Common causes of impaired macro-invertebrate communities include sediment, nutrients, toxic pollutants, and increased stream flow from urbanized areas such as parking lots, roads, and other impervious surfaces.



2013 Conservation Education Awards

Several conservation educators and students were recognized for their achievements at the annual Conservation District Awards Banquet on May 14, 2013. Award presentations included:

Conservation Principal of the Year

- Denise Barth, Catawba Trail Elementary

Conservation Teachers of the Year

- Melinda Beach, St. John Neumann
- Nancy Frick, A.C. Moore Elementary
- Lucia Jacobs, W.J. Keenan High

Above and Beyond Awards

- Lisa Collins, Pontiac Elementary
- Elizabeth Gregory, J.P. Thomas Elementary
- Lori Wenzinger, Harbison West Elementary

SC Envirothon Coaches

- Constantina Green, Lower Richland High
- Joan Alexander, W.J. Keenan High
- Judi Ray, Dreher High

Arbor Day Student Winners

- Kristen Boaz, Harbison West Elementary
- Theresa Pickler, St. John Neumann

Above Left: Commissioner Kenny Mullis and Associate Commissioner Mary Burts present Dixon and Kristen Boaz with an Arbor Day Student Recognition for their video titled "Vas Happening?"

Above Right: Education Coordinator Chanda Cooper presents sixth-grader Theresa Pickler with an Arbor Day Student Recognition for her poem titled "The Trees are Life's Keys."

Below Left: District Chairman John V. Green and Associate Commissioners Lt. Col. Ted Hart and Jim Rhodes pose for a photo.

Below Right: Joan Alexander (second from left) and the Envirothon team from W.J. Keenan High School are recognized for their participation in this year's competition.



Second Midlands Local Food Summit



The Midlands Local Food Collaborative is a partnership of organizations dedicated to a robust local food system in the Midlands of SC. The Collaborative members provide education, technical and financial assistance and community advocacy to promote sustainable agriculture, land stewardship, and equitable food access.

Approximately 25 local farmers, chefs, distributors, resource professionals and support organization representatives gathered for the Midlands Local Food Summit on June 17, 2013. The Midlands Local Food Collaborative organized the meeting in coordination with a statewide formal assessment commissioned by the SC Departments of Agriculture (SCDA) and Commerce called "Making Small Farms Big Business." This assessment is being conducted by food systems consultant Ken Meter, President of Crossroads Resource Center.

Jack Schuler, President of the Palmetto Agribusiness Council, introduced the assessment by recognizing the potential for small farms to contribute to SC's overall agricultural wealth. The study will

help SC achieve the "50 x 20" vision of the SCDA to increase the annual economic impact of agribusiness in the state to \$50 billion by the year 2020.

At the Summit, Midlands farmers and local food stakeholders expressed their regional vision and needs to Mr. Meter for inclusion in the statewide assessment.

Mr. Meter asked the participants to envision the economic developments needed to increase the amount of food grown in SC for local markets. The ensuing dialogue included suggestions for economic developments as well as a need for increased education and advocacy dedicated to building a sustainable food system. For a complete summary of the event, visit www.rcgov.us/rswcd.

Farm Field Trips

Down on the Farm

Richland County Farm Field Trips for K-12 Students

"The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings."
-Monsanto Founder

greenhouses to use extensive production, and marvel at the aquaponics system that raises tilapia from a Tilapia (fish) pond to grow edible flowers and watercress. While you're there, say hello to the earthworms, chickens, and bees!

Doko Farm
2101 Cedar Creek Rd
Blythewood, SC 29016
(803) 673-7739
dokofarm@gmail.com
www.dokofarm.org

This sustainable rural farm has been in the family of Amanda and Joe Jones since 1839. On your visit, you will hear stories from two centuries of farm life; learn about the many sustainable farming practices employed; cook; and meet a variety of gentle farm animals. Features include:

- Pasture-raised poultry, goats, sheep, and hogs
- Rare and heritage breeds
- Great Pyrenees livestock guardians
- Soil-building practices in the kitchen garden
- Bees for pollination and honey

Carolina Bay Farms
5301 Lower Richland Blvd
Hopkins, SC 29061
(803) 412-4929
carolinabayfarms301@gmail.com
www.hopeworks.com/carlinabayfarms

Visit Carolina Bay Farms to meet heritage breed chickens, turkeys, and guinea hogs and see how sustainable practices are used to produce heirloom vegetables. The property has a rich history, having been a 1700 acre plantation owned by the King of England. Nature-lovers will enjoy visiting the nearby Carolina Bay, a unique ecological feature for which the farm is named.

Crooked Cedar Farm
1464 Cedar Rd
Blythewood, SC 29016
(803) 786-4841
crookedcedarfarms@gmail.com
www.crookedcedarfarms.com/

This small family farm uses organic practices to grow a variety of seasonal vegetables and perennial plants and flowers. Visitors will learn about the benefits of raised-bed and field-grown vegetable production, meet friendly free-range chickens, and find the tree that gave the farm its name.

Cottage Strawberry Farm
2533 Trotter Rd
Hopkins, SC 29061
farm (803) 695-1714 / field trip (803) 260-1058
cottiestrawberrfarm.com
www.cottiestrawberrfarm.com

Cottage Strawberry Farm has been providing the community with sweet, juicy strawberries for over 30 years. Groups of 54 per school groups can visit the farm to pick strawberries and see a working berry farm. Each child will receive their own small container for berry-picking, and one teacher per class will receive a bucket. Children will also receive strawberry coloring books and stickers!

Are you a teacher looking for farm field experiences for your students?

Look no further! "Down on the Farm" is a guide to Richland County farms offering educational experiences for K-12 students. Featuring six farms and several events and support organizations, this brochure provides the information you need to connect with representatives at each location and schedule your farm field trips.

The brochure is available online at www.rcgov.us/rswcd. If you would like to be added to the guide, please contact us at (803) 576-2080.

Scan this code with your QR code reader to access the Farm Field Trips Brochure!



Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections



FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The Calhoun/Richland Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee nomination period ends on August 1st. All eligible farmers and ranchers are encouraged to participate in this year's county committee elections by nominating candidates by the August 1st deadline.

To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area in which the person is a candidate.

Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others, and organizations representing minorities and women also may nominate candidates. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign the nomination form, FSA-669A. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>.

Nomination forms for the 2013 election must be postmarked or received in the Calhoun/Richland USDA Service Center in St. Matthews, SC by close of business on August 1, 2013. Elections will take place this fall.

While FSA county committees do not approve or deny farm ownership or operating loans, they make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms.



Scan this code with your QR code reader to access information about FSA county committee elections and nomination forms.

Nationwide, approximately 7,800 farmers and ranchers serve on FSA county committees. Committees consist of 3 to 11 members elected by eligible producers. Newly elected committee members and alternates will take office on January 1, 2014.

If you have any questions, please contact Jack Nettles at the Richland/Calhoun FSA Service Center at (803) 874-3337 ext. 111.

Humor: My Lady Humidity

By Associate Commissioner Jeff Laney

She holds me in an unforgiving embrace
Night and day she is with me.
I marvel at her as sweat beads upon my brow.
In a futile effort, I fan myself
But she is upon me.
She envelops me in an instant.
She is unrelenting
So I slam the door in her face.
I stand inside, still and quiet.
She waits outside my door.
The coolness of my home chills my sweat.
I breathe.
Finally...Humidity is gone!



*Associate Commissioner Jeff Laney
with his daughter,
Virginia Grace Laney*

Support the District: Become an Affiliate

Affiliate Members are a vital part of our conservation team. The monetary support given annually by Affiliates helps us carry out our conservation and stewardship programs within the County. Please support our efforts by becoming an Affiliate Member today! Contributions are tax deductible.

- () \$25—Affiliate Member
() \$50—Silver Affiliate Member
() \$100—Gold Affiliate Member
() \$250—Platinum Affiliate Member
() Other: _____

Please return this form and a check made payable to Richland Conservation District to the address below:

Richland Soil and Water Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street
Rm. 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204

2013 Affiliate Members

Gold Members

Colliers International

Edwin Eargle

Raymond & Julianne Hendrix, Jr.

Steve & Janie Stancyk

Piggly Wiggly

Silver Members

Mary Burts

Clothing World

Michael Davis

Margaret Gardner

Glenda Lewis

Lizard's Thicket

Affiliate Members

Jason Carter

Cooper Family Farms

Jeff Laney

Al & Linda McNeil

Honorary Members

South Carolina Farm Bureau

Thank you for your support!





Facebook: www.facebook.com/rswcd
Website: www.rccgov.us/rswcd
Email: sotlmandwater@rcgov.us
Fax: 803.576.2088
Phone: 803.576.2080

Richland Soil and Water
Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street, Rm. 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204

Richland Soil and Water
Conservation District

Save the Date

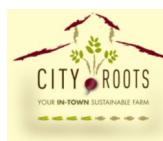
No-Till Field Demonstration at City Roots Farm

Are you working your soil, or letting your soil work for you?

Tuesday, September 24, 2013

9:00 am—11:00 am

1005 Airport Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29205



Near the Hamilton-Owens Airport
in the Rosewood Neighborhood
www.cityroots.org

City Roots, Columbia's premier urban farm, is transitioning to no-till vegetable production with assistance from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. At this two-hour field demonstration, you will see how the transition to no-till is improving soil health and the farm's bottom line. City Roots will demonstrate their no-till equipment and discuss the challenges and opportunities no-till production poses to SC vegetable growers.

RSVP with your name and contact information to Charlie Fisher: fisherc@rcgov.us or (803) 576-2080.

