



ANNUAL REPORT

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Our Mission

Our mission is to protect natural resources through education, programs, and cooperative efforts with partner organizations to achieve common goals for the benefit of all citizens of Greenville County with efforts in promoting:

Urban and Land Use Planning | Conservation Awareness | Sustainable Agriculture

District Commissioners



Dr. Robert Hanley
Chairman



Brett Tankersley
Vice-Chairman



Danny Howard
Treasurer



Bruce Countryman
Commissioner



Ashley Clark
Commissioner

A Message from the Chairman

This year has seen well above average rainfall for Greenville County, which has put many of our conservation practices to a test. Stream restoration work on the South Saluda has weathered the storms, protecting water quality and woods adjoining the restoration work that the Conservation District supported. Farmers who have implemented conservation practices with the assistance of federal Environmental Quality Improvement Project funds have benefited our watersheds with projects such as fencing to restrict stream access by cattle. Our staff continue to educate County residents on ways each one of us can conserve and protect our soil and water resources.

This fall, Danny Howard was re-elected and Mike Stewart was elected to the Commission to serve four year terms. They join current commissioners, Brett Tankersley, a farmer, and Bruce Countryman, a water resources expert. Ashley Clark resigned her appointment to the Commission, as she will be moving out of the District. We look forward to welcoming a fifth commissioner appointed by SCDNR soon. We are happy to have these commissioners working with us to guide our programming.

The Commission continues to benefit from an exceptional staff. From conservation workshops, to successful grant applications and administration, watershed activities, and stormwater education, the District staff has successfully carried out and furthered the mission of conservation in Greenville County.

The District also made an impact at national conferences this year. We are proud to have our education staff make two presentations at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts in Nashville, Tennessee. Lynn and Shelby presented sessions on watershed education opportunities and a wrap up of our NACD Urban Agriculture Grant program, Woodside City Farm, to conservation district attendees from all over the US. They also showed off our innovative watershed model and explained its use as a teaching tool. Kirsten, our District Manager, presented information on medicinal grazing outcomes at the National Grazing Lands Coalition Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. Additionally, Greenville played a big part in the regional conservation scene, hosting the Environmental Education Association of South Carolina Annual Conference in 2018.

As always, you are welcome to any Commission meeting (usually held on the second Tuesday of the month). You also can keep up with us on Facebook and our district website.

Yours in conservation,

Rob Hanley
Chair

From Our District Manager



Hello friends!

This has been another great year for Greenville SWCD. We continue to pioneer outreach on many levels, including students, homeowners and farmers. **One of the reasons that conservation districts are so effective is that they are positioned to be able to respond to local problems quickly.** When we were in drought mode for so many years, the Greenville District hosted a program called Every Drop Counts that helped troubleshoot irrigation leaks and problems for farmers and landowners. Now that there is more than enough rain, our focus has shifted to giving technical advice about the problems that rain cause.

With each rain we get a waterfall of calls (pun intended) concerning flooding, drainage and erosion. **It is my pleasure to meet with landowners to help brainstorm remedies for these stormwater-related problems.** While the District does not have the funding to implement the changes on the ground, it can be helpful for a homeowner to at least learn a path forward. Part of my expertise is in helping landowners understand the regulatory maze because every property is different and has different jurisdictional regulatory agencies overseeing it. For instance, US Army Corps of Engineers, Greenville County Floodplain Administrator, SCDHEC, and Greenville County Land Development Division could all be involved on one property. It can be mind-boggling for the uninitiated. If you have a question, please call me at (864)920-6404. I'm here to help.

I have also been busy hosting farming workshops and speaking to grazing groups. This year we have been talking to farmers one-on-one about soil health, as well as speaking in groups. I taught as an adjunct professor for the required AGR202 Soils class in the Greenville Technical College Sustainable Agriculture Program this fall and it was especially fulfilling knowing that these future farmers had learned the biological aspect of our soil so that they can farm most effectively. I also spoke about soil health to the Clemson Master Equine class and at the National Grazing Lands Coalition.

In 2015, I started a facebook group called the Regenerative Grazing Group to help me learn how to feed the herd of microbes under the soil so that they would enrich the soil so the soil can feed my grazing herd above the soil. I invited a couple of local friends who were interested in trying rotational grazing. It has now become an active group of close to 6000 people from all across the world. If you are interested in learning how to rotationally graze, or troubleshoot problems you are having trying to rotate pastures, join us. There are people there who are guaranteed to know less than you, and others who are guaranteed to know more. Fortunately, the experts are very willing to share their knowledge. It is a welcoming community that accepts you wherever you are on your grazing journey. I hope to see you there!

District programs are alive and well! It gets more exciting every year. Give us a call to see if we can help you with your conservation needs. Healthy soils to you!

Kirsten Robertson
Manager

In Greenville County and Beyond...

- Over 39,000 members of the public stopped by educational booths at the Southern Home and Garden Show, Party for the Planet, Tails and Trails, and Earth Day Fairs at local businesses.
- Education Staff made monthly appearances on WSPA's Your Carolina, teaching about conservation issues, stormwater pollutants, and our campaigns.
- Fifth grade students throughout Greenville County learned about stormwater and watersheds via our 3D Watershed Model demonstrations.
- With GCSWCD assistance, Slater-Marietta Elementary School continued their Trout in the Classroom project and trout release.
- Our annual essay contest had 279 entries from 12 schools. Twelve winners were chosen from grades 5 through 8.
- 54 Scoop the Poop signs, 1000+ pet waste bag key chains, and over 1000 rack cards were distributed to various entities at the request of county citizens.
- County drivers took notice of our wrapped Suburban with promotional messaging featuring the Poop Fairy and Yucky Ducky campaigns, which impacted approximately 213,780 citizens. More importantly, this was a conversation starter everywhere we went. We were able to have in-depth one-on-one conversations about our campaigns.
- GCSWCD was a presence at local farmers markets this year, with booths in Taylors, Travelers Rest, Downtown Greenville, and at Swamp Rabbit Cafe. Stormwater and conservation information was distributed to all.
- Our largest event this year was the iMAGINE Upstate festival for STEM/STEAM education promotion. Attendance was over 16,000 on one day.
- US outreach totals over 4.7 million people. Our Poop Fairy campaign is now seen in 23 states.

EDUCATION CONTESTS FOR GREENVILLE COUNTY STUDENTS

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Open to students K-12

The photography contest has four categories:

- We All Need Trees** - Anything tree related. Leaves, branches, fruit, a single tree, or a forest
- Agriculture and Farming** - Photos of farm animals, crops in the field or on the table, people working in farm fields, farm equipment, old barns, and buildings
- Focus on Water** - Anything water related including local rivers, lakes, streams, and the animals that inhabit them
- We Live on the Land** - This can include landscapes, scenery, soil or animals that live on the land

\$50 prize for each category winner, \$100 Best in Show.

For more information, visit www.GreenvilleSoilandWater.com

ESSAY CONTEST

Open to students 5th-8th Grades

Entry Deadline March 14, 2019

The 2019 essay contest theme: **Life in the Soil; Dig Deeper**

Three \$50 prizes for each grade with a special gift for teachers of winners.

For more information, visit www.GreenvilleSoilandWater.com

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

All education programs are adjusted for the appropriate age group and are great for students, camps, homeowner associations or other interested groups.

STORMWATER/WATER CYCLE/POLLUTANTS

Covers the whole water cycle, definition of stormwater, and what can pollute our waterways. Participants learn what they can do to keep our rivers, lakes, and streams clean for future generations! Meets 4th grade specific SC standards, but can be modified for any grade level.

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

Students love to learn about our local waterways with our interactive watershed model! This program meets SC standards for 5th grade, but can be modified for grades 6-12.

CONNECTING KIDS TO THE LAND

How did that apple get into your lunch box? Where does our food come from? Participants learn food facts, what crops are grown in SC, agriculture basics, and how familiar food items are created. They'll learn what foods come from animals or from plants and what sustainability means to our food supply.

LET'S GET WET!

(No participants will actually get wet!) Using activities from the award winning Project WET curriculum, students will learn about all things water through activity based interdisciplinary and interactive activities - from watersheds and water quality to human use and conservation.

LET'S GO WILD!

Participants learn about wildlife with Project WILD activities. Project WILD is one of the most widely-used conservation and environmental education programs. Actual fur pelts and skulls and scat replicas facilitate questions and answers. Participants learn about local animals with the help of educational puppets.

By the Numbers



Article by Shelby Cohen, GCSWCD Community Relations Coordinator



We work hard to inform Greenvillians about stormwater and how it carries pollutants into local waterways. The seemingly small choices we make every day have big, long-term impacts on the world around us. With the help of our partners, Soil & Water was able to reach over four million people in 2018. Here are some of the year's highlights, and what's up next:

Stormwater Education

In 2018, we continued our stormwater campaign, "Clean Water Starts With Me". This campaign reminds individuals that we can all reduce our impact on natural resources by adopting better practices. We continued using our one-of-a-kind Greenville County Watershed Model at schools and community events to demonstrate how water flows across the land during rain events, picking up pollutants and depositing them in rivers, lakes, and streams. At iMAGINE Upstate, we unveiled our new chalkboard wall, as well as our conservation checklist. By the end of the event, students from across the Upstate had created a stunning visual representation of all the ways we can conserve water. Our checklist was so popular that it's become a staple in our school presentations and community events.



Face-to-face conversations are key, but with a small team we can't be everywhere at once. In 2018, we strengthened our relationship with the Greenville Journal and have been promoting conservation practices monthly. I also had an op-ed published in the Journal titled "Imagine a Day Without Water." Between our new presence in the Greenville Journal and our appearances on the TV program, Your Carolina, we've been able to reach a record number of Greenvillians.

Youth Development

In 2018, youth outreach programs were held in classrooms, and in informal education settings, such as parks and community centers. Over 40,000 children participated in the youth outreach programs this year, which included stormwater activities, vermicomposting after-school programs, and a number of summer camps with Mill Village Farm, Long Branch Baptist Church, and community centers across the County. Our 5 week program with Mill Village Farm focused on sustainable agricultural practices and how sourcing local food can promote healthy soil, water, and other natural resources.



This year was our fourth annual **Wet & Wild Summer Camp** with Clemson Extension's 4-H program (and it was the wettest one we've ever had). This week-long, outdoor camp was attended by 30 campers ages 6-14 who learned about watersheds, water quality, human impacts on the environment, insects and animals. We're already preparing for the 5th annual camp, and are excited to develop a new generation of environmental champions!

To learn more and register for Wet & Wild camp, visit www.wetandwild.camp.

March Into Earth Day

On March 28th, 2018, a new tradition started here at County Square. With the help of the County's Litter Prevention Coordinator, Solid Waste department, and Keep Greenville County Beautiful, we were able to celebrate local organizations that work hard to keep the "green" in Greenville. We had giveaways and door prizes, including native plant seedlings, compost, and rain barrels. Over 450 County employees stopped by to discover 30+ County departments and local organizations committed to protecting our environment. As a result of County employees' enthusiasm for green initiatives, our team was able to schedule an Employee Recycling Education day at County Square. It was an opportunity to make sure every employee had a recycling bin and knew what could and could not be recycled. It was a great turnout and we're excited to bring even greener pastures to the County in 2019.



Mark your calendars! This year, *March Into Earth Day* is open to the public and will be held on March 27th, 2019 from 10AM-2PM.

Conferences, Committees, Workshops, and New Partnerships

We continue to serve as State Coordinators for **Project WET** and attended the 2018 USA Coordinator's conference in Mystic, Connecticut. Lynn is the new Southeast Advisory Council member, and she helped lead roundtable discussions at the Coordinator's conference on activity adaptations. In 2018, we joined Project Learning Tree (PLT) and Project WILD to host another Triple Facilitator workshop in Columbia. We also hosted 10 WET workshops throughout the year.

Lynn continues to serve on the Environmental Education Association of South Carolina (EEASC) board, and we helped plan a wonderful EEASC conference here in Greenville in 2018. This year, I also joined Keep Greenville County Beautiful as an advisor to the board. I look forward to helping them carry out meaningful projects in 2019.

Staff presented at five national and regional conferences in 2018. Presentations included "Effective Education Made Simple" and "From Kudzu to Crops - Starting an Urban Farm in Greenville, SC" at the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) National Conference. We also showed off our watershed model at the conference's ongoing share fair. Kirsten presented "Medicinal Grazing and Unexpected Outcomes" at the National Grazing Lands Coalition conference, which highlighted soil health, rotational grazing, and biodiversity on her farm.

2018 saw the completion of a partnership project and welcomed some brand new ones! Aside from our new partnership with the Greenville County Library System to open Greenville's first seed library (see page 13), we're also teaming up with Clemson Extension to support their School & Community Gardening program. We have funding available for six (6) Greenville County schools that have put at least three teachers and/or members of staff through the School Gardening for SC Educators program. You can find more information about this on our website.

We were happy to complete a project with Friends of the Reedy River in 2018. We helped design and install an informational kiosk at First Baptist Church on the Swamp Rabbit Trail. Stop by and learn about native plants, riparian buffers, and how you impact our waters next time you're in the neighborhood!



Affiliate Membership

Since 1971, citizens, businesses, and educational institutions in Greenville County have donated tax deductible gifts to the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District. The District uses affiliate member funds to provide a wide variety of environmental education programs, demonstration projects, and outdoor learning opportunities.

District education programs reach students of all ages, classroom teachers, informal educators, pet owners, homeowners, farmers, contractors, members of the public, and elected officials.

We need your help to continue these important programs!

- Awards for Greenville County students for photographs, science projects, and essays written on natural resource conservation topics
- Interactive exhibit displays at area events, fairs, and Earth Day celebrations
- Funding for mini-grants to schools and organizations for conservation education

A Heartfelt Thank You To Our Affiliate Members

Partners

South Carolina DNR

Leaders

Clemson University
Kilwins
ReWa - Renewable Water Resources

Conservationist

Strange Brothers Grading Company, Inc.

Educators

Darrell & Georgia Harrison

Patrons

Caliber Engineering Consultants, LLC
Green Lakes Properties
Darrell & Georgia Harrison
Mountain View Farm
Nature Walk Photography
Pecan Dale Farmstead
Padula's Plants and Gardens
Stratus Building Solutions

Supporters

Ashmore Brothers/ Rogers Group
Bob & Claire Bradbery
Commerce Club
Sean & Satrena Dogan
Dr. David L. Hargett
Howard Farms
Hyatt Regency Greenville
Laurens Electric
Dr. Walter McPhail
John W. Parris
Paul Wickensimer

Contributors

Dennis & Judy DeFrancisco
William N. Gressette, Jr.
Danny & Nan Howard
Sprague & Sprague Consulting Engineers

Staff Receives State Wide Recognition

Lynn Pilewski Named Employee of the Year by the SC Assoc. of Conservation Districts

Lynn Pilewski, our Education Program Coordinator, was honored at the State conservation district conference in February 2018 for her outstanding service to the Greenville SWCD. Lynn's work didn't only reach South Carolina though. She has planned and hosted multiple national, regional and state conferences here in Greenville. She has also spoken/presented at multiple national, regional and state professional conferences both here and all over the United States. Lynn supports the Greenville County's stormwater NPDES education program and continually comes up with new ideas for outreach. She has been awarded many grants to help fund education and designs the majority of the education outreach materials for the District including newsletters, brochures, website, t-shirts, vehicle wraps and tents. Her creative ideas make learning about stormwater fun and engaging including creating the Yucky Ducky Arcade which was comprised of Stormwater PLINKO, Defend Your Drain (similar to air hockey), and Toss Your Trash (similar to corn hole game). She has distinguished herself both locally, and nationwide. Her award is well-deserved. Congratulations Lynn!

Kirsten Robertson Receives Friend of Extension Award

In 2018, it was a great honor for Kirsten Robertson, District Manager, to receive the Friend of Extension award from Clemson Extension. This is the highest award that South Carolina Association of County Agricultural Agents (SCACAA) can bestow upon a non-member. Kirsten has completed the Greater Greenville Master Gardener and Master Pond Manager programs, serves on the Clemson Extension Advisory Board in representing the 4H program, and supports the yearly water-themed day camp co-sponsored by our District and Clemson Extension. In addition, Kirsten has taught soil health to the Clemson Master Equine class this year as well as to a group of Master Gardeners in Clemson's lunch-and-learn program. She has facilitated and co-sponsored numerous other projects with Clemson Extension over the years. She is proud to be a friend of Clemson Extension.

Meet Our Newest Commissioner

Mike Stewart, a native of Massachusetts and graduate of Merrimack College, made Greenville his home over five years ago through a job transfer opportunity. He grew to love the Upstate quickly and has seen how it has changed immensely in such a short amount of time, in both population and commerce.

His interest in conservation and preservation, led him to attend gatherings held by Upstate Forever and Conservation Voters SC to learn more. He also began to advocate for fundraising efforts of various nature and conservation organizations. Eventually, Mike decided that the best way to influence a positive balance of meeting needs of residents and keeping our resources protected in Greenville County is to become directly involved, and is proud to have become an addition to GCWSC during this past election cycle.

In his time away from work and other duties, Mike enjoys hiking, live music, supporting bat conservation and the conservation of heritage and native fruit trees and other plants, as well as attending Greenville Drive games and local soccer matches.





visit us at www.GreenvilleSoilandWater.com

Getting Conservation on the Ground in Greenville

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) to address resource concerns such as erosion, water quality, soil health or wildlife.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps farmers build on their existing conservation efforts while strengthening their operation. Whether farmers are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop yields, or develop wildlife habitat, NRCS can design a CSP plan to help meet those goals.

This year, Greenville County farmers constructed high tunnels to extend the growing season and improve soil health, planted pollinator friendly habitat, installed cross vanes and j-hooks for better trout habitat and access roads to reduce erosion.

If you have farmland, pastureland or forestland and would like assistance in improving the resources on your land, give us a call to schedule a visit.

Shady Grove High Tunnel Workshop

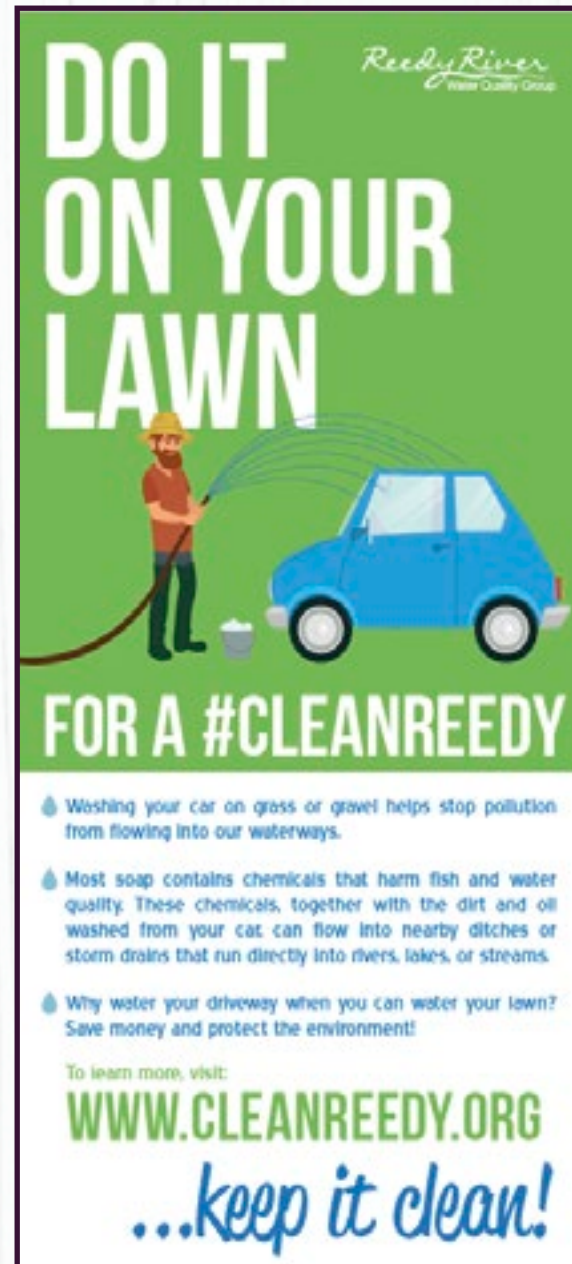
In 2018, a high tunnel workshop sponsored by Minority Landowner Magazine and NRCS was hosted by Shady Grove Baptist Church. We had several veterans that attended the two day event. The first day was spent learning about various agency programs and technical assistance available to farmers, no matter how big or small their operation. The second day we constructed the high tunnel. The church participates in Live Well Greenville and grows vegetables that are donated to folks in the community who lack access to fresh vegetables.



Projects With Partners

Reedy River Water Quality Group Implements Innovative Stormwater Campaigns

GCSWCD staff members serve on the Public Outreach Committee for the **Reedy River Water Quality Group**, a consortium of government agencies, universities, and community partners aimed at protecting the Reedy River. In 2018, we successfully planned and implemented two water quality campaigns. How you ask? By encouraging people to **DO IT ON YOUR LAWN** and **GO AU NATURALE!**



Next on the agenda? **GET DOWN AND DIRTY**, a campaign focused on soil testing! Keep an eye out for information in 2019.

New Partnership Sprouts County's First Seed Library

This year, we welcomed a new partnership with the Greenville County Library System to establish the County's first seed library. Set to open on Saturday, February 23rd, the seed library will be housed at the Berea (Sarah Dobey Jones) Branch Library.

This project will not only provide free, easy access to seeds year-round, but will also be the focal point of monthly workshops on water and soil health, heirloom varieties, backyard conservation practices, container growing, seed saving and more. Our goal is to provide education on growing food, flowers and native plants; to increase local food production and promote healthy diets; and to help preserve plant diversity with heirloom seeds. The seed library will offer 60 different varieties of seed, and will have a bookshelf full of food-related titles nearby.

The District would like to thank the following companies and organizations for donating seed: Sow True Seed, Slow Food Upstate, Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, Seed Savers Exchange, and High Mowing Organic Seeds. We would also like to thank the Greater Greenville Master Gardeners, who have volunteered to sort and repackage seed, and deliver workshops.

If you or an organization you're affiliated with would like to present or help sponsor seed library workshops, please contact our community relations coordinator, Shelby Cohen.

The first Seed Library workshop, which will be on square foot gardening, will be held on Monday, March 11th at 6:30PM. Join us to learn new ways to grow more in small spaces (and for a chance to win giveaways)!

Upcoming workshops and information about the seed library can be found at: www.greenvillelibrary.org/seed-library



Meet Our Staff

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

From left: **Lynne Newton**, District Conservationist, **Collin Buckner**, Soil Conservationist
Drew Williams, DNR Program Coordinator, **Chris Workman**, DNR Program Coordinator



Soil and Water Conservation District Staff

From left: **Meagean Dugger**, Conservation Assistant, **Lynn Pilewski**, Education Program Coordinator,
Kirsten Robertson, District Manager, **Shelby Cohen**, Community Relations Coordinator
 (Not Pictured) **Linda Creel**, Administrative Support, **Ebony Flowers**, Conservation Assistant



Staff Directory

Kirsten Robertson	District Manager	864-920-6404
Linda Creel	Administrative Support	864-920-6405
Lynn Pilewski	Education Program Coordinator	864-920-6397
Shelby Cohen	Community Relations Coordinator	864-920-6401
Lynne Newton	NRCS District Conservationist	864-920-6402
Collin Buckner	NRCS Soil Conservationist	864-920-6396
Drew Williams	DNR Program Coordinator	864-920-6403

Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District
 301 University Ridge, Suite 4800
 Greenville, SC 29601
 864-467-2755
www.greenvillesoilandwater.com

Seaside Awards Gala





GREENVILLE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
301 University Ridge, Suite 4800
Greenville, SC 29601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PLEASE DELIVER TO:

Upcoming Events

Save the date for these District events that will be happening over the next several months! Stay tuned for more information!

Annual Essay Contest
March Into Earth Day @ County Square
iMAGINE Upstate
Party for the Planet
Tails and Trails
GCSWCD Enchanted Forest Gala
Wet & Wild Water Camp

Entries Due March 14
March 27
April 6
April 20
May 11
May 16
July 15-19

