



South Carolina's Current Developments



Enjoy the last
days of Summer

Home of the first soil conservation district plan...February 4, 1938

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

August/September 2004

From the Office of the
State Conservationist
Walter W. Douglas



Dear NRCSers:

As the end of the fiscal year approaches, I look back at this year with a sense of pride and accomplishment. We are coming to the close of another great year of conservation successes in the Palmetto State. NRCS, working closely with our state and local partners, continues to make a great impact in improving our soil and water resources. Most importantly, we have maintained our commitment to our customers and the service they deserve.

I would like to extend a special thanks and congratulations to the planning committee of USDA's 9th Annual Cultural Awareness Day which took place in August. The program was enlightening, entertaining, and it was clearly evident that the committee put a lot of time and energy into planning this momentous occasion.

I recently had the opportunity to travel to Washington, DC, to meet with our new Regional Assistant Conservationist for the East—Richard Coombe. He invited the state conservationists of the East region to come together and discuss openly our concerns and hear our suggestions. I am excited about working with Mr. Coombe, and I believe that he is fully committed and has the expertise, knowledge, and skills to lead our region.

Several weeks ago, we signed the first Conservation Security Program (CSP) contract in South Carolina in Newberry County. Thanks to John Long who graciously allowed NRCS state and national officials, local legislators, and members of the media to come together at his beautiful farm in celebration of the beginning of CSP in the Saluda Watershed. Over the next month, we will be working closely with headquarters staff to select the next South Carolina watersheds to be included in CSP for FY 2005.

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photo: Emory Holsonback, Greenwood County, NRCS

Notes from the Field

South Carolina Celebrates Signing of First CSP Contract

NRCS' New East Regional Assistant Chief



Richard Coombe, NRCS East Regional Assistant Chief.

Richard Coombe was selected as Regional Assistant Chief — East, for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in August of 2004. In this position, he serves as a management representative of the Chief, providing direction of NRCS programs and activities and overall leadership and supervision to state conservationists in the NRCS East Region. States and areas

included are Alabama, Caribbean Area, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia.

From 1993-2003, Coombe served as founding Chair and CEO of the Watershed Agricultural Council, Inc. He oversaw an annual budget of \$15 million and a professional staff of 150 working with more than 500 farmers and foresters to develop and implement a comprehensive planning approach to watershed protection in the 1.2 million acre New York Watershed, the water source for 9 million people.

Coombe visited South Carolina in August to attend the Conservation Security Program (CSP) signing ceremony in Newberry County and promised to return to the Palmetto State soon.

Richard Coombe was selected as NRCS Regional Assistant Chief — East, in August.

Speaking from Newberry County, Richard Coombe, Regional Assistant Chief - East, for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), today echoed Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman in announcing that \$41 million in contracts will be awarded to farmers and ranchers in 22 states who will be the first in the nation to participate in the new Conservation Security Program (CSP).

In South Carolina, one of 22 states to participate in this debut program year, NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas announced that 76 contracts would be awarded to producers in the Saluda River watershed. Total acreage enrolled in the program in South Carolina was over 20,000. Land uses included cropland, irrigated cropland, and pasture.

Speaking from John Long's farm in Newberry, South Carolina, Douglas said that producers would receive between \$500-\$32,000 (over a ten year period) for a broad range of conservation work that is protecting and enhancing natural resources including water quality, soil quality and wildlife habitat.

A signing ceremony was held at Long's farming operation to celebrate the signing of the first CSP contract in the state.

The applicants will be participating on three different tiers reflecting both their documented historical conservation management as well as their agreement to do additional practices to further enhance the environment.

"All successful applicants have achieved high technical standards for protecting soil and water quality," said Douglas. "These are model conservationists who we can point to as our first line of defense in managing ecosystems like the Saluda River Watershed with both productivity and careful stewardship as twin goals."



NRCS East Regional Assistant Chief Richard Coombe spoke at South Carolina's CSP signing ceremony in Newberry, SC.

continued-

While conservation incentive programs and technical assistance from NRCS date back to the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s, CSP represents the first time agricultural producers are being paid for ongoing stewardship.



pictured left to right: SC Senator Ronnie W. Cromer (District 18), SC Representative Jeff Duncan (District 15), NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas, Newberry CSP participant John Long, NRCS East Regional Assistant Chief Richard Coombe, and Newberry SWCD Chairman Wayne Satterwhite attended the CSP signing ceremony in Newberry County.

Lancaster Conservation Partnership Proud of Local Conservation Leaders

The Lancaster Conservation Partnership is proud of two of its outstanding conservation leaders.

Lancaster Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD's) chaplain, Reverend R. A. Morrison, retired from 56 years in the ministry, and was honored at a celebration where Lancaster SWCD Chair Sandy Nelson presented Morrison with an award. The Lancaster Conservation Partnership presented him with a beautiful shadow-box plaque that pictured him in his garden.

Morrison is not only the district chaplain, but is also Treasurer of the Lancaster Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association—a network for small farmers in Lancaster County. The association has about 30 members and meets monthly to learn



Reverend Morrison and Lancaster NRCS District Conservationist Ann Christie.

about farm-based businesses and garden and yard planting and maintenance.

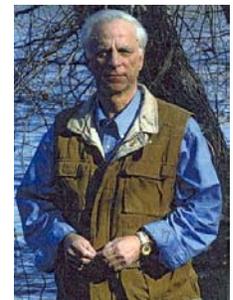
Morrison once operated a community sweet potato cooperative. The curing barn was built on his property, and he recorded the bushels and varieties people brought to him to cure. He and his family have a three-acre garden for their own use, but he also provides his community and fellow church members with produce, and sells the excess from his farm.

His home is on a bluff overlooking the Twelve-Mile Creek floodplain, with a beautiful view of the surrounding countryside. The garden in front of his house is terraced with permanent grass strips. However, his family's property is slowly being surrounded by new housing developments, as Charlotte suburbia moves south into Lancaster County.

Morrison is truly a fine conservationist and several years ago he was featured in national USDA photographs and video footage which illustrated his dedication to protecting soil and water resources.

Lancaster is also home to another outstanding conservationist—Lindsay Pettus. He founded the Catawba Valley Land Trust in 1992, and currently serves as President. Pettus was named "2003 Conservationist of the Year" by the South Carolina Wildlife Federation.

Thanks to the efforts of Pettus, and others, there is a large greenway through the city of Lancaster. Pettus and the Catawba Valley Land Trust added land to Landsford Canal State Park, creating protected property on the Lancaster County side of the Catawba River, and adding a significant tract to the west of the current park. Land's Ford is a ford across the Catawba River that has been used since prehistoric times. The park is the site of a canal that was hand-built to get boat traffic around the shoals in that part of the Catawba River. The Land Trust has easements on numerous properties and is now working to purchase a large tract of land that will protect a lakeside area from development.



Lindsay Pettus is a leading conservationist from Lancaster County.

Standing Up, Standing Out, Standing Together

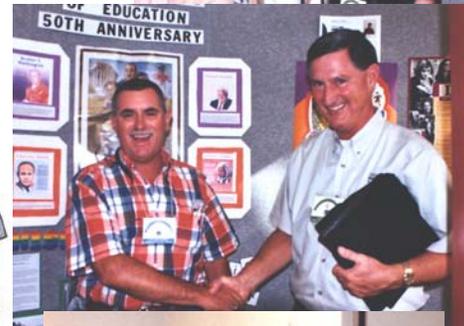
USDA Cultural Awareness Day 2004

On Thursday, August 26, 2004, NRCS, along with Rural Development and other USDA partners, gathered at the Saluda Shoals River Center Conference Facility to celebrate the 9th annual USDA Cultural Awareness Day.

The program featured international foods and folkloric dance, several breakout sessions on culturally diverse topics, and a general session speaker who discussed "A History of Popular Music in America—from the 1960's to Today."



A day of
learning,
fun,



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Sing it
Larry!



Conservation Photo Contest

Results for Contest #1



**1st
Place**



photographer: Emory Holsonback, Soil Scientist, Greenwood, SC. Pasture field/pond in Edgefield County.

2nd Place



photographer: Sandy Elkins, Pickens SWCD Manager. Fish in a pond designed by NRCS, Pickens, South Carolina.

3rd Place



photographer: Joe Cockrell, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife Manager. Sunset over wetlands of Bear Island Wildlife Management Area in the ACE Basin (Colleton County).

Honorable Mentions



Photographer: Joy Boswell, SCDNR Program Coordinator, Lexington County. Photo of Great Blue Heron in the photographer's backyard.



Photographer: Emory Holsonback, NRCS. Taken at the 2004 Festival of Flowers at Park Seed in Greenwood, SC. June 2004.



Photographer: Lisa Anderson, Marion SWCD Clerk. Legette's Mill Pond, Marion County, SC.

Paddle Happy

A Personal Adventure Story

by Dennis DeFrancesco, Soil Scientist, Greenville

I had another wild hair idea recently when I got a kayak, then heard about these river “sojourns.” They are mostly in the northeast US, and are guided canoe and kayak trips down about a dozen rivers. They are meant to promote river stewardship, and make you aware of the local natural resources.

This was a 106-mile 7-day trip on the Schuylkill River, which runs through my hometown in Pennsylvania. Schuylkill (skoo’ kil) is an Indian word meaning “*Hokey smokes, Bullwinkle, you sure you want to do this!*” The trip went from Schuylkill Haven up in the coal region down to prestigious Boathouse Row in Philadelphia.

I knew there were numerous patches of fast water, especially in the first few days. No problem. I mean, I have to drive in Greenville every day, where using your turn signals is considered a sign of weakness. I can handle this, right?

So on the registration forms where you sign your life away, I checked that I was an “intermediate” paddler. *Big mistake.* I certainly am intermediate on the flat water of lakes where I do all my paddling. On moving water, I found out real quick that it’s a whole different story. I don’t know squat about moving water. On flat water the rocks and trees stay where they’re supposed to. On moving water it’s a conveyer belt out of control. Or so it seemed on that first day.

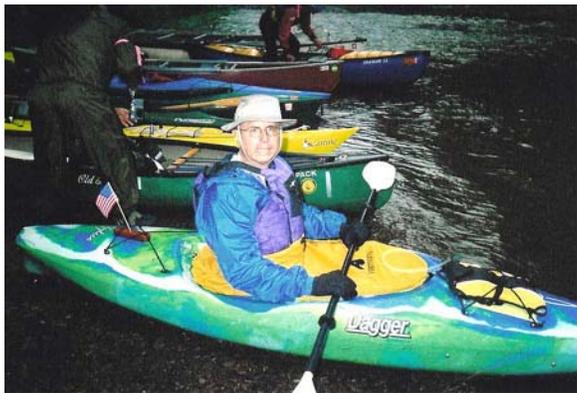
As the first morning wore on the rain got heavier. And then you could see your breath. Several boats already capsized in some of the rapids, but so far I was fine, although barely. Our first portage was around a dam where lunch was waiting. Hot soup! We were all pretty cold by then and it sure helped.

After lunch was a different story. We had to navigate “The Chutes.” It’s a set of rapids formed through some bridge supports. I gave the order for ramming speed and almost made it

through. But a big standing wave washed on top of my spray skirt and really weighed the boat down. Then I did a slow motion capsized. No dramatic action-packed fast-paced Hollywood-style plunge. Nope, I just slowly fell out of the boat.

The rescue boats are waiting at every rapid, and they were there in a second. It’s amazing to see how adept these folks are at what they do. The water actually felt warm but I shivered in the cool air. The polyester worked, though, and I was warm again as soon as I got back paddling.

The next day the rain stopped but the river rose almost two feet. That day they showed us how to “ferry” across a moving stream. It’s a way of controlling where you go in the current. The instructors were so clear even I could grasp it. And it worked! Soon I was getting confident on the river.



NRC Ser Dennis DeFrancesco tried his hand at kayaking and had a great experience.

The following days were great. The weather broke, and we hit 92 degrees on the third day. We were getting into a lot of flat water with only occasional rapids. I liked that, but my kayak is strictly a beginner’s model. That means it doesn’t do anything well. It’s stable but it also takes more energy to paddle. I’d see these dainty ladies in their touring kayaks merely dipping

their paddles in the water to move, and I had to do power strokes to keep up.

With mixed feelings, on Day 7 I entered Boathouse Row in Philadelphia with my load of beaver pelts. I finally felt quite relaxed about paddling on moving water and I hated to get off the river. The only hurdle left was balancing while climbing up out of the boat onto the higher dock. No, no, I made it OK. No story there (but I was worried about it.)

What a great adventure. Absolutely wonderful experience. It was blissful to thrilling but never terrifying. Made a lot of friends whom I will never recognize out of their paddling clothes and boats. When I do this again, I will check *no* on the form asking “Ever seen a kayak before?” so they know who they are dealing with.

Celebrating Hispanic American History
September 15-October 15, 2004



**The Story of California's
 Mendez v. Westminster**

This is a story that is not well known, but is real and untold history.

In 1944, Orange County, California schools were segregated. There were schools for whites and schools for Mexicans. Sylvia Mendez was only eight years old when she and her brothers walked with their Aunt Sally Vidaurri and cousins to enroll at the 17th Street School in Westminster, California. School officials told the aunt they would enroll the Vidaurri children, who had light skin and eyes, but they turned away Sylvia and her brothers because they had dark skin and a Mexican last name.

Mrs. Vidaurri enrolled none of the children that day. Instead, she stormed home and told her brother Gonzalo Mendez what had happened. Gonzalo and his wife Felicitas did not want to fight, but they had no choice. So they led a community battle that changed California forever and set important legal precedent for ending segregation in the United States.

Seven years before Brown v. Board of Education, Mendez v. Westminster ended segregation in Orange County and throughout California. Two important players in the historic chain of events include NAACP lawyer Thurgood Marshall and California Governor Earl Warren. Marshall went on to argue and win the landmark desegregation case of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 and eventually became the first black Supreme Court Justice. Earl Warren went on to become the Chief Justice who wrote the Brown v. Board of Education decision.

Sandra Robbie, producer of a PBS documentary on this case, says, "So many of us believe that the fight for Civil Right is a black and white battle that was fought and won solely in the American South. Mendez v. Westminster is the story of people of many colors fighting for Americans equality right here in Orange County. Most of Orange County, much less the United States, has no idea of the important contribution that was made here. In fact, most of the people I've spoken with, including teachers and lawyers, have no idea segregation ever existed in California."

Mrs. Robbie is in the process of trying to distribute this documentary to every PBS station in the country as well as all schools in California. Look for it soon on your local PBS station.



**Plans are underway
 for the
 2005
 Conservation
 Partnership
 Conference!**

Blueprint for Success

When?

The conference begins on Monday January 3, 2005, with the Soil and Water Conservation Society Symposium. The partnership conference begins on Tuesday, January 4th and ends on Thursday January 6th.

Great door prizes!

Where?

Charleston Place Hotel

Who?

All conservation partners are invited and encouraged to attend.

NOTE:

District Commissioners will be admitted to the SWCS symposium FREE of charge and if they attend the Monday symposium will get one night's lodging paid by SWCS!

What's it all about?

Featuring NACD Chief Executive Officer Krysta Harden, as well as discussions on the Conservation Bank, NC's Cost-Share Program, and an entertaining and uplifting presentation by South Carolina's own Glen Ward.

Don't miss the SCCDEA silent auction and also Clemson Radio's *Your Day* live radio remote!

Look for registration materials coming in October.

This year, registration cost for the Partnership Conference will be lower than in previous years.

You don't want to miss this conference!

Conservation Alternatives for Shoreline Erosion

by Sabrenna Bennett, Public Affairs Assistant

SCE&G, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), East Piedmont Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council and NRCS have formed a partnership in an effort to educate Lake Murray residents and contractors on the innovative conservation alternatives available for shoreline protection and erosion control.

Protecting the shoreline from the damaging effects of erosion is a constant concern for lakefront residents. As a solution, many have used the conventional practice of installing natural rock riprap along the shoreline. While this approach is effective in preventing erosion, it may cause damage to wildlife habitat and often fails to filter out harmful pollutants. Luckily, riprap is not the only solution.

Bio-engineering and open-cell block are other conservation choices that protect the shoreline and provide erosion control. These two conservation practices are usually combined with vegetation to create a strong barrier against erosion and filter out polluted run-off, as well as enhance wildlife habitat and add natural beauty to the landscape.

"These new innovative techniques now offer shoreline protection with vegetation as an effective esthetic," stated Jim Wilson, NRCS urban conservationist. "Erosion on lake shorelines in South Carolina can exceed one foot per year of land lost, which effects water quality and landowner value. We applaud SCE&G for approving conservation approaches to enhance Lake Murray."

The cost of these conservation techniques depend on site conditions and materials. However, each technique is comparable in cost.

Demonstrations were held on June 29, 2004, and Lake Murray residents and contractors were invited to an overview of Lake Murray shoreline objectives, which was followed by demonstrations of riprap, bio-engineering, and open-cell block conservation practices along 150 feet of Lake Murray shoreline.

For more information, contact Wilson at (803) 576-2084.



Bioengineering combines the use of rocks and vegetation to protect shoreline and enhance wildlife habitat. Open-cell concrete block protects the shoreline and enables vegetation growth.

Conservation Photo Contest!

The NRCS Public Affairs Team is pleased to announce the 1st Annual SC Conservation Partnership Photo Contest!

The contest is open to all employees of SC's Conservation Partnership. Submissions can be either print or digital pictures, (digital pictures must be *at least* 150 dpi). Photos must be taken in South Carolina and should include one or more elements of SWAPHA (soil, water, air, plants, humans, and animals).

When submitting photos, include your name and contact information, and detailed information about the subject matter of the photo (location, etc.)

There will be a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winner every quarter, so keep submitting your photos!

Send submissions to:
Amy O. Maxwell, NRCS
1835 Assembly Street,
Room 950, Columbia, SC, 29201,
or email to amy.maxwell@sc.usda.gov.

NOTE: Winning photos will be published in Current Developments, and may be reproduced in other outreach publications, or displayed in the NRCS State Office. Photos will become property of NRCS public affairs once submitted and will not be returned.



Conservation Partnership News



15th Annual ECO Camp Sponsored by Beaufort SWCD

The Beaufort SWCD presented its 15th annual summer day camp, known as *ECO Camp*, June 28 – July 2. Community and agency partnerships make this educational opportunity fun and exciting for sixty elementary-school aged campers every year.

Campers enjoyed hands-on learning experiences daily with experts in the environmental sciences field as they stepped into the wetlands of Beaufort and learned about the plants, animals, and soils of these ecosystems.

The Beaufort SWCD in sponsorship with the local Technical College of the Lowcountry and the Port Royal Elementary School make this camp possible. Other presenting agencies included NRCS, SCDHEC, SCDNR's *Project Wild*, SCPRT-*Hunting Island*, Lowcountry Institute-*Spring Island*, Daniel Payne-*Native Plant Society*, Lowcountry Estuarium, and *Music by Cynthia*. On *Friday Funday*, the Beaufort County Farm Bureau Women provided a cookout for campers and camp staff.



Ridgeland NRCS District Conservationist Chris Graves (foreground) and NRCS Resource Soil Scientist Bob Eppinette gave ECO campers a hands on experience with soil.

SC Agricultural Education Leader Named to Conservation Hall of Fame

John W. Parris was named to the Southeastern Conservation Hall of Fame by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The first South Carolinian to be honored, Parris was recognized at the annual conference of the Southeastern Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) in Savannah, Georgia. SCDNR, SCACD, and NRCS jointly nominated Parris for the award.

The retired Executive Director of the SC Land Resources Commission, Parris was recognized for his leadership in implementing premier programs in land and water protection, mined land reclamation, dams and reservoir safety, storm water management and erosion control, landscape architects and soil classifiers registration, satellite mapping and cartographic information and environmental education. He was also a leader in the promotion of micro-irrigation and conservation tillage technology.

He led in the establishment of the SC Conservation Districts Foundation, the organization of the State Conservation Workshop for Youth and initiated the transfer of the property to the Greenville County School District for the development of the Roper Mountain Science Center.



Parris presently serves as State Director of Public Affairs for Agricultural Education in South Carolina and is editor of *AGRIBIZ*, the state's agricultural education magazine.

Meet Our Newest NRCS Employees!

Chris Graves will be serving Jasper and Beaufort Counties as the new NRCS District Conservationist. Graves and his family reside in the town of Ridgeland. Chris, his wife Meggan and son Marshall, moved here from West Tennessee. Graves transferred from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where he worked in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Graves and his wife lived in Ridgeland



Chris Graves is the NRCS district conservationist in the Ridgeland office.

two years ago when he worked for Savannah Coastal Refuges as a Wildlife Biologist. During that time, his wife served the Lowcountry as an equine veterinarian for Edisto Equine Clinic. Graves has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science with a minor in Forestry, along with a Master of Science degree from the University of Tennessee. Graves was born and raised in Maryville, Tennessee. He is looking forward to working with the good people of the Lowcountry and plans to work hard in assisting the two counties with natural resource issues. Although, finding a balance between natural resource conservation and urban growth is no easy task, he hopes to help those in the community realize the importance of natural resources in our lives and the life of the local economy. "Everyone must work together in maintaining this beautiful place we live," emphasized Graves.

Bradley Poston is a new soil conservation technician in the Marion office. He was born in Mullins, SC, on August 4, 1977, and graduated from Pee Dee Academy in 1995. He has worked on his father's farm in Mullins since he was a child. The farm started out small but grew to encompass 80 acres of tobacco, 600 acres of no till soy beans, 150 acres of wheat,



Bradley Poston is a new soil conservation tech. in the Marion office.

and 20 head of grazing cattle. In August he left the farm where he gained his knowledge and love of natural resources. Now he can use these skills he learned on the farm in his NRCS career. He was thrilled when NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Operations James Williams called to offer him the job. "I know NRCS is going to open a new door of learning for me and be a great place for me to grow personally and professionally." He looks forward to working with the folks in Marion and doing his part to protect soil and water resources.

Rich Williamson is a new soil conservation technician in the Kingstree Field Office. Originally from Kingstree, SC, Rich attended Horry-Georgetown Tech. and in 2001 earned a degree in Forestry. Before signing on with NRCS, he was a Forest Technician with American Forest Management. He enjoys outdoor activities



Rich Williamson is a new soil conservation tech. in the Kingstree office.

such as hunting and fishing, and recently got married to his wife, Brandi, from Turbeville. Rich grew up on a SC farm and he is looking forward to giving back to the community in which he was raised.

FY 2004 SC Earth Team Hours

A reminder:

Please don't forget to turn in all your Earth Team hours to Sabrenna Bennett by **September 17th, 2004.**



This is your chance to catch up if you have forgotten to turn in some hours throughout the year.

For more information, call (803) 765-5419, or email sabrenna.bennett@sc.usda.gov.

This and That

New Sustainable Agriculture Website Features Wealth of Info, Quick Navigation

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program recently unveiled a new website designed to help farmers and ranchers increase profitability, protect the environment, and improve rural communities. Now, information gleaned from years of research conducted in partnership with the nation's most innovative producers is available from the comfort of your own home. Bookmark www.sare.org as your first source of information on cutting-edge sustainable farming and ranching technologies, useful contacts, and funding sources for research and education initiatives.

"It's easy to find the main things I want from SARE." says Dick Bowen, SARE's State Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator from University of Hawaii Extension. "I now see the SARE site as a gateway to the major info I need on sustainable agriculture." Topical indexes allow the user to browse a variety of subjects, including animal production, crop production, and economics and marketing. The new site is also sorted by audience, giving farmers and ranchers, consumers, researchers and educators a fast track to the information that's most useful to them. SARE's website is maintained by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) for the SARE program. SARE is funded by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), USDA. For more information about grant opportunities and other resources available through SARE, visit www.sare.org.

**The Newberry Soil & Water Conservation
District
and Camp Conservation
Are Extremely Proud and Honored To
Host**

A Walk With Rudy Mancke

*World Renown Naturalist
and TV Personality*

**Lynch's Woods Park
Newberry, SC**

Saturday, November 6, 2004

10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. *Rain or Shine*

Tickets: \$ 25.00 Per Person

***Limited Tickets are available at the
Newberry USDA Service Center, 719
Kendall Road. For more information contact
Annette Davis at 803-276-1978 Ext. 3 or by
email at annette.davis@sc.nacdnet.net.***

*All Proceeds from **A Walk with Rudy Mancke** will
benefit Camp Conservation, a natural resources
educational program held each July in Lynch's
Woods Park, sponsored by the Newberry SWCD.*

Personnel News

NEW EMPLOYEES

Derrick Lark, GS-0458-05, Soil Conservation Technician in Laurens, effective August 22, 2004.

Bradley Poston, GS-0458-05, Soil Conservation Technician in Marion, effective August 22, 2004.

Richard Williamson, Jr., GS-0458-05, Soil Conservation Technician in Kingstree, effective September 5, 2004.

PROMOTIONS

Brian Hardee, Soil Conservationist in Sumter was promoted to GS-0457-09 effective June 13, 2004.

Collin Buckner, Soil Conservationist in Greenville was promoted to GS-0457-09 effective July 25, 2004.

Johnny Lee, Soil Conservation Technician in Manning was promoted to GS-0458-07 effective July 25, 2004.

Marty Bright-Rivera, Human Resources Assistant in Columbia, was promoted to GS-0203-07 effective July 25, 2004.

Scott A. Hawkins, Information Technology Student in Lexington, was promoted to GS-2299-03 effective June 27, 2004.

Shaun Worley, Soil Conservationist in Conway, was promoted to GS-0457-09 effective July 25, 2004.

REASSIGNMENT

Joshua Sherman, Soil Conservationist in Newberry, was promoted to District Conservationist in Cuba, New Mexico, effective August 8, 2004.

NRCS' Mediation Program

According to Conflict Resolution Specialist Trime Persinger, "all behavior makes sense." No matter how outrageous or unreasonable a person seems, in his or her own mind, *in that moment*, their words or actions are fully justified. That's why it is sometimes necessary to wait until *after* the incident to go back and work things out. Sometimes this is best accomplished with a third person's help--the help of a mediator.

That's where the NRCS Mediation Program can help. Also known as *alternative dispute resolution*, the program can help employees in this situation. And guess what? It does work!

If you need the help of a trained mediator, contact NRCS Human Resources Specialist Dory Reeves at (803)253-3920 or dory.reeves@sc.usda.gov and she will assist you in finding a certified mediator.

