South Carolina's Current Developments

NRCS South Carolina

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

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service May/June 2004

From the Office of the State Conservationist

Walter W. Douglas

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Dear Conservation Partnership:

South Carolina NRCS recently welcomed four new employees. They are Bishopville Soil Scientist Caleb Gulley, Ridgeland District Conservationist Christopher Graves, State Office GIS Specialist George Sullivan, and State Office Financial Assistant Vickie Tatro. These individuals are a great addition to our outstanding cadre of employees and I encourage you to meet them if you have not already done so.

I would also like to welcome our four new Soil Conservation Student Trainees. Welcome to Antron (St. George), Crystal (Manning), Jamie (Greenville), Megan (Conway), and Carly (Abbeville). I hope that your experience with NRCS is one that encourages you to pursue a career in natural resources.

In August, you'll have an opportunity to meet and interact with these new employees during our 9th annual *Cultural Awareness Day*. The planning committee is organizing an outstanding program, and I am very excited about this year's event.

Recently, I was selected as one of six members to serve on the Chief's Policy Advisory Committee representing the Southeast region. This is an exciting time in the history of our agency, and I am proud to be a part of this group which is helping to shape the future of NRCS.

Finally, I want to thank you all for your diligence and extra efforts during the past few months to keep up with ever-increasing workloads. Your efforts do not go unrecognized, and I am proud of the work that our employees are accomplishing. Thanks for all you do to make South Carolina NRCS continually come out on top.

Walter W. Douglas

Notes from the Field

Orangeburg Landowner Committed to Enhancing Wildlife Habitat

Sabrenna Bennett, NRCS public affairs assistant

For some landowners, conservation is just as important as making a profit. After many years of crop production, some landowners choose to return their land to its natural habitat. Specifically, an environment where soil and water resources are protected and wildlife can flourish. Such is the case in Orangeburg County at the farm of Charles Farnum.

In 1998, he enrolled 235 of wooded acreage into the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), thereby making the area a haven for wildlife. WHIP is a voluntary program administered through NRCS. The program is for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. NRCS provides technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed.

Farnum entered into a five-year contract and received technical assistance from Orangeburg NRCS District Conservationist Frank Stephens and Soil Conservationist Charles Holland. The program transformed previously barren woodland into a paradise of food and protective cover for native wildlife.

The owner of a family farm spanning several generations, Farnum's primary focus was to achieve a population increase in bobwhite quail, deer, turkey dove and song birds. To accomplish this, he worked closely with NRCS conservationists to plan and install several wildlife habitat management practices, including seven acres of firebreaks, prescribed burning (which is usually done in the months of January and February), woodland wildlife openings, forest stand improvement, and upland wildlife habitat management.

This is one of the several food plots that Farnum established to attract wildlife.

"One of the main attractions for the wildlife has been the woodland wildlife openings that were established," said Stephens. Six openings were installed, each consisting of 17 acres. "Mr. Farnum uses these openings to manage the natural vegetation which benefits a variety of wildlife species."

Charles Farnum, left, and NRCS Soil Conservationist Charles Holland, discuss WHIP.

The wildlife openings have accomplished the intended goal by attracting numerous deer, turkey, dove, and bobwhite quail. Other animals sighted include rabbits, owls, hawks, foxes and a large population of fox squirrels. In an effort to prevent overgrowth and maintain the openings, Farnum rotates plots every three years, disking or bush hogging the previous plots.

Farnum also felt that the terrain of his land played a key role in attracting wildlife, and for this reason, open fields and the comfort and shelter of trees and native vegetation is present throughout his land. Unfortunately, Farnum experienced damage due to snow and ice this winter. Holland said, "The harsh weather left over fifty acres of broken and damaged trees, forcing him to clear-cut portions."

Despite setbacks, however, Farnum never loses sight of his goals. "I am a huge nature lover," he said. "I appreciate and respect wildlife and even know all of my trees by first name," he joked.

Farnum is committed to maintaining the conservation practices he established to attract and protect wildlife. "WHIP is a great program to help landowners see how they can incorporate wildlife habitat management *and* production simultaneously," said Holland. For more information about this program, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip or contact your local NRCS office.

Silvopasture: The Benefits of Integrating Trees with Livestock

Sabrenna Bennett, NRCS public affairs assistant

In the business of farming, using the land and its natural resources to reap the greatest benefit is usually a main priority. Farmers are now learning how to use their land for multiple purposes, while also maintaining its quality and protecting precious resources. Conservation practices and techniques are one way that farmers are balancing production and resource protection in South Carolina. One such practice is silvopasture, which provides farmers with multiple benefits by integrating the planting of trees with livestock grazing and forage operations. Saluda County NRCS District Conservationist Hugh Smith says, "Silvopasture systems can optimize the production of both timber products and forage." Ultimately, silvopastures can provide economic returns while creating a sustainable system with many environmental benefits.

Saluda farmer Fletcher Arant has seen these environmental benefits firsthand at his 750- acre family farm (which consists of pasture, timber, and 60 cows). In 2001, Arant enrolled 65 acres into a ten-year easement through the NRCS Forestry Incentives Program (FIP), a program which the 2002 Farm Bill de-authorized.

Hugh Smith, Saluda NRCS district conservationist, says that spacious planting of the trees increases their overall health.

He explains that he is able to "kill two birds with one stone" by combining the benefits of FIP with silvopasture. Fletcher is not only providing an ample and healthy grazing system for his livestock, but is also able to make a profit from the timber production. In addition, grazing can enhance tree growth by controlling grass competition for moisture, nutrients and sunlight. Well managed grazing provides economical control of weeds and brush without herbicides, maintains fire breaks and reduces habitat for gnawing rodents. Fertilizer applied for forage is also used by the trees. In addition, livestock manure recycles nutrients to trees and forage.

Most of the pines planted are very young and in the early stages of growth.

At Arant's farm, there are 350 loblolly pines per acre with the trees spaced ten feet apart in each row and each row is separated by a 30-foot alley. Sufficient space is needed to allow the full potential of growth, which in turn improves the overall quality of the trees.

"One of the best benefits of this system is that timber management is minimal," explains Smith. Once trees are planted, usually in winter, cows aren't allowed to graze the pasture for three years, allowing the trees time to grow and strengthen. Grass is usually cut and used as hay. As for maintenance, trees are usually pruned about three times before harvesting, and are considered full grown and mature between 20-25 years.

Other benefits of the program are that the trees provide a haven for wildlife habitat. The addition of trees has brought about an increase in the number of quail, deer and turkey that inhabit the farm. The trees also act as buffers, preventing harmful nutrients from entering a nearby lake and other water sources.

"The combination of silvopasture and FIP has noticeably increased wildlife diversity and improved water quality on this operation," said Smith. By incorporating silvopasture with tree production, soil is protected from water and wind erosion, and the soil is enhanced with organic matter. In contrast to concentrated livestock operations, silvopastoral systems are less likely to raise environmental concerns related to water quality, odors, dust, noise, disease problems and animal treatment.

By creating a silvopastural system and incorporating additional environmental benefits through FIP, Arant has gone one step further in securing the health of the soil and water resources at his farm.

In the future, Fletcher intends to maintain the silvopastural system even after his FIP contract expires, and hopes to add more timber.

Water Quality Camp Wets Kids Appetites for Environmental Education

Sabrenna Bennett, NRCS public affairs assistant

Seventh graders in eastern Orangeburg County recently put their knowledge of water quality to the test. The South Carolina State University 1890 Research and Extension Program and collaborating agencies, such as the Orangeburg Soil and Water Conservation District, DHEC, Clemson Extension Service and the Rock Hill AME Church, sponsored the Horse Range Swamp Education Day Camp, March 31-April 2, 2004, at Santee State Park.

The three-day program consisted of an outdoor classroom setting with learning stations on topics, such as *What is a Watershed?, Exploring our Groundwater*, *What is a Wetland?,* and *Pollution Solutions.* Students were evaluated on their knowledge of water quality and information gained from the educational sessions.

The Horse Range Swamp in Vance, SC, is one of many watersheds with elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria, found in the digestive tract of all mammals. The Horse Range Swamp Education Program is geared toward educating residents within the watershed on practices they can implement to reduce concentrations of this bacteria, as well as improve the water in area streams and tributaries in their communities.

Students learned about water quality at a 3-day camp at Santee State Park in Orangeburg County.

"I think this is an excellent program for the community, as well as the kids, and helps to spread a very important message about water quality," stated Diane Curlee, NRCS Education Coordinator in Orangeburg County.

Soil Scientist "Dig In" at NRCS Workshop

A five-day workshop for NRCS soil scientists was held March 15-19, 2004, in Sumter, SC.

Eighty soil scientists from different states throughout the Southeast attended, including South Carolina NRCS State Soil Scientist Ben Stuckey.

The workshop included several presentations on the different GIS technologies used in the field, such as ERDAS, 3DMapper, ArcView, Orthromapper, and ArcGIS, as well as presentations on the software used to make soil manuscripts, such as NASIS and Eoftq.

The workshop also featured hands-on demonstrations of computer software, outdoor field studies of soil, and a photography contest.

Soil scientists learned about different types of computer technology during a five-day workshop held in Sumter, SC.

Hands on learning in the field was a component of the soil workshop.

South Carolina Nursing Students Volunteer to Make a Difference

The Orangeburg County Conservation Partnership in South Carolina is proud of an outstanding group of Earth Team volunteers from Orangeburg/ Calhoun Technical College. A class of ADN (Associate Degree in Nursing) students signed up as Earth Team volunteers to earn community service hours. As a result, they have become the movers and shakers behind two major yearly events sponsored by the Orangeburg Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

An Earth Team Volunteer, who is also an Associate Degree Nurse (A-D-N) Instructor, fits a bicycle helmet on a student at Nix Elementary during Farm Safety Day Camp

For the past 5 years, this class of energetic and enthusiastic men and women, along with their instructors, has been the backbone of two special yearly events. Their efforts resulted in flawless programs year after year and have made the events extremely popular in the county. The two events are the *Progressive Farmer* Farm Safety Day Camp and the Make-A-Splash Water Festival, both which would not happen without the assistance of these outstanding Earth Team volunteers.

Make-A-Splash is a national water festival held each year in September, and South Carolina has been involved since 2000. This event, designed for 4th and 5th graders, is a big hit in the county. The Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp is held every October, and sponsored by the Orangeburg SWCD. With nearly 300 participants last year, the camp has grown since it first started with just over 100 children participating.

Orangeburg SWCD Manager Glenda Lewis said these two events are so successful because of these motivated volunteers. "I don't know what we would do without Earth Team volunteers, and these nursing students are essential to the success of these events." The nursing students are involved in the programs in a variety of roles, including serving as speakers at different stations, presenting puppet shows, fitting bicycle helmets, and Lewis added, "They are often the first to arrive and the last to leave."

"Their dedication to helping us spread the word about the importance of conservation and safety is unwavering every year, and we are so thankful." The group has logged over a thousand hours since they joined the Earth Team!

Because of these remarkable Earth Team volunteers, the Orangeburg Conservation Partnership is making a difference in the conservation of South Carolina's natural resources.

Camp Conservation

DAY CAMP

Ages 9-12

Monday, July 12th- Thursday, July 15th, 2004

Lynch's Woods Park, Hwy. # 76, Newberry

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Registration Fee $ 60.00

Natural Resource Topics include:

- Wildlife & Habitat
- Forestry and Forestry Products
- Soil and Water Quality
- Farming and Agriculture

Campers will be exposed to nature *"up-close and personal"* and all camp activities encourage a hands on approach to conservation and natural resource education.

FOR INFORMATION and REGISTRATION

CONTACT: Annette Davis, District Coordinator, Newberry SWCD, USDA Service Center, 719 Kendall Road, Newberry, SC 29108

Phone: 803-276-1978 ext. 3.
Fax: 803-276-7887
E-Mail: newberry.swcd@sc.usda.gov
or visit the web site at:

www.campconservation.com

Fort Jackson's New Commanding General Tours NRCS Conservation Work

NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas and Fort Jackson Commanding General Abraham Turner met on May 11, 2004, to tour conservation sites at the army installation.

Recently appointed as commander to Fort Jackson, Turner was interested in learning the conservation history of the area, particularly efforts to control soil erosion and improve wildlife habitat. NRCS Urban Conservationist Jim Wilson organized the tour.

Douglas said, "It is apparent that General Turner is committed to natural resource protection and that he truly cares about soil and water conservation."

Conservation work is ongoing at Fort Jackson in an effort to maintain the efficiency of the training facility and protect the natural resources which adorn the area.

Ricky Walker (foreground), NRCS civil engineering technician stationed at Fort Jackson, discusses conservation practices with General Turner (left) and NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas (right).

South Carolina SWCS Presents Memorial Scholarship

On May 3, 2004, Doug Deaderick, chairman of the SC Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) Education Committee, presented the Keith Cain Memorial Scholarship. The award went to Strom Thurmond High School's Darla Simons. Keith's family attended the presentation including his parents Margaret and Ray, and his brother Brent.

The scholarship was created in memory of former East Piedmont RC&D Coordinator Keith Cain, who passed away on October 30, 2003. Cain began his career with NRCS in 1970.

pictured from left to right: Doug Deaderick, SWCS Education Committee Chair; Brent Cain; scholarship recipient Darla Simons; and Keith's parents, Margaret and Ray Cain.

A Remarkable and Inspiring SC Earth Team Volunteer

The Story of Union County's R. E. Gallman
by Wayne Henderson, SC Disabilities Emphasis Program Manager (DEPM)

I recently had the opportunity to meet and talk with a unique individual from Union County, South Carolina. R. E. Gallman is a cattle farmer in the Kelly-Kelton area. He also raises goats and a llama. Gallman has been an Earth Team Volunteer for the Union Conservation Partnership for the past six years and also manages and services one of the Union SWCD's no-till drills. Over the last twelve months, he has completely overhauled the drill and it is now in excellent condition, considering its age.

One of the things that make Gallman so unique is his name. When asked what his initials stand for, he always replies, "R and E." His father was named R. E. Gallman and so is his son and grandson. When asked why the initials "R" and "E", he replies that his father was born on his mother's birthday and her initials were R. E. (which stand for Rapsey Elizabeth).

Gallman is a devoted family man and is very community-oriented. It would not be unusual to see him on his *Massey-Ferguson* tractor plowing his neighbor's gardens or working in the hay fields. He cuts, rakes, and bales his own hay. With assistance from his sixteen-year old granddaughter, he maintains the grounds at his church where he is also an active member.

About one year after Gallman became an Earth Team volunteer, he was involved in a farming accident. While installing a fence, the wire became entangled in the auger on the tractor and wrapped around his leg, completely severing it above the knee. He also lost several fingers in the accident. If not for the quick thinking of his neighbor, he could have died.

R.E. Gallman is a dedicated Earth Team Volunteer in Union County.

During his period of rehabilitation, Gallman admits that it would have been easy to have given up completely on farming. But giving up is not in his nature. To see him today, with the assistance of his tractor and golf cart, it's obvious he can manage his daily routine very well. He certainly has not let his disability slow him down and he is an inspiration to all who know him.

Top Ranking USDA Official Visits South Carolina

Mark E. Rey, USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, visited Columbia, South Carolina, on April 29, 2004. Under Secretary Ray was in the state to speak at a University of South Carolina (USC) symposium. Following his presentation, Rey met with USDA-NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas and USDA Forest Service Supervisor for Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests Jerome Tomas, Ph.D. A press conference was hosted by NRCS at the Columbia Metropolitan Airport. Rey discussed issues including the Farm Bill, the Healthy Forests Initiative, and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

left to right: USDA Forest Service Supervisor for Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests Jerome Tomas, Ph.D.; USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark E. Rey; and USDA-NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas.

Mark E. Rey was sworn in as the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment by Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman on October 2, 2001. In this position, Rey oversees the USDA's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

DuRant Presented with Honorary FFA Degree

SC NRCS Soil Conservationist and Outreach Coordinator Bethel DuRant was recently recognized by the SC Future Farmers of America (FFA) Association.

At the 77th State FFA Convention on June 10, 2004, DuRant received the prestigious Honorary State FFA Degree. DuRant was bestowed with the honor because of his outstanding support of the FFA and agricultural education in South Carolina.

Bethel DuRant received an Honorary State FFA Degree.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources- Land, Water, and Conservation Division and South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts

Conservation Partnership News

Meetings Scheduled to Discuss Wildlife Conservation Plan

A series of meetings will be held statewide to gather public input on the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, which will guide conservation of many wildlife species in South Carolina for the next decade.

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is in the process of writing a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan as part of the requirement of the State Wildlife Grants program instituted by the federal government. The plans are due to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by Sept. 30, 2005.

"This is not another bureaucratic exercise," said Anna Huckabee, DNR wildlife biologist coordinating the plan in South Carolina, "but a plan unlike all others preceding it in terms of its scope and funding. For the first time, all states have received significant funding to create a document that will be the 'mother of all plans,' drawing from all those preceding it, to cover the full array of wildlife, including game, non-game, freshwater, and marine, with special emphasis on those species with the greatest conservation need. The goal of the program is to keep common species common. By identifying fish and wildlife that are at risk for future listing as threatened or endangered, the strategy becomes one of protection rather than a costly recovery effort."

Each of the public meetings on the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan will be held from 6-9 p.m. Additional meetings will be scheduled for August 31st, September 7th, 14th, and 21st, from 6-9 p.m., with locations to be announced.

More information on the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan planning process can be found on the DNR Web site at www.dnr.state.sc.us under the link "State Wildlife Grants" or by calling the Columbia DNR office at (803) 734-5534.

FFA Team Wins South Carolina Envirothon

The 2004 South Carolina Envirothon was held May 7th at the Clemson University Center for Community and Economic Development. Nineteen high school teams from across the state competed on several environmental subjects such as aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and urban conservation. The topic for this year's Envirothon was *Natural Resource Conservation in the Urban Environment*.

Designed to foster cooperation and teamwork, teams are tested not only on their basic knowledge in these topic areas, but their ability to apply that knowledge to solve real-life problems.

Congratulations to the Calhoun Falls FFA team who took the first place award and will go on to nationals. Second place went to Spartanburg High School, and Wando High School from Charleston, SC, came in third. Honorable Mention went to Thurmond FFA from Edgefield, SC.

The winners will go to the national Envirothon competition in West Virginia in late July.

"The 2004 Envirothon Competition was once again a huge success due to the dedication of all those that support it throughout the year. The students that participate take back with them a greater knowledge of our natural resources and the benefits of working cooperatively. Throughout our communities, future decision making by these students will be profoundly affected."

-Joy Boswell
2004 SC Envirothon Coordinator

Calhoun Falls FFA earned the top prize at the 2004 South Carolina Envirothon and will go on to the national competition in July.

New Edisto Beach Interpretative Center Teaches How to Tread Earth Lightly

With the theme "Choosing to Protect Our Coast," the new Edisto Interpretive Center was officially opened by SCDNR and S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT) May 3, 2004, in a formal ceremony at Edisto Beach State Park. The services, programs and exhibits in the new facility promote the value of the ACE Basin Estuarine Reserve, the largest such natural reserve on the East Coast, and methods to live more compatibly with the environment.

"People are already fascinated with the South Carolina coast," said Chad Prosser, director of SCPRT. "This project allows them to visit and experience the coast in more enriching ways. We think it's important to provide services that promote South Carolina's unique and distinct character."

The Edisto Interpretive Center was opened in May and will be the headquarters for Edisto Beach State Park's interpretive programs.

The $3.3 million building was funded by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Estuarine Reserve Research program. It will be the headquarters for Edisto Beach State Park's interpretive programs, including the Discover Carolina curriculum-based education initiative. SCDNR will use the facility for education programs and marine research services.

At least four features will help make those multiple learning projects easier. An exhibit gallery contains displays that encourage hands-on discovery, including touch tanks with live sea creatures. A classroom and wet lab are equipped with microscopes and materials that support study sessions. A boardwalk leads to a dock from which school children can interact with the environment they learn about in the center, and DNR can launch its vessels on educational cruises to study marine life.

The building also has a conference room with audio-visual equipment, kitchenette and lush natural setting which can be ideal for business conferences.

"We are committed to educating South Carolinians on their state's most precious resources," said John Frampton, SCDNR director. "This center joins other research facilities we operate in the ACE Basin region to help us study marine ecology and share our findings with the public."

Called a "green building," the center also practices the "tread more lightly" ethic it preaches. Its design uses sustainable technology for everyday utilities such as lighting, heating, plumbing and air conditioning. Its construction process also included waste reduction practices and retention of as much natural vegetation as possible. Some of the structural technology includes a rainwater collection system that stores water for use in the restrooms; a geothermal heating and air conditioning system that uses natural heat found in the soil; rot-resistant cement fiber siding that requires little maintenance; and pervious concrete that allows storm water to percolate to the ground rather than run off into nearby marshes and waterways.

The new center is located near Edisto Beach State Park's Live Oak boat landing off SC 174, 50 miles southeast of Charleston. Its grand opening marked the beginning of several projects in progress at the park, including a new campground, two new cabins and a four-mile trail that links them all together.

For more information on the center and other improvements at Edisto Beach State Park, call the park at (843) 869-2756.

Meet Our New Employees!

Meet more new employees in the next edition of Current Developments!

Caleb Daniel Gulley, Soil Scientist, *Bishopville, SC*

Caleb graduated from Tennessee Technological University (TTU) in December of 2003 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (concentration in Environmental AgriScience). While in school, Caleb was a member of the TTU Soil Judging Team, competing in such places as Red Wing, MN; Murray, KY; Clemson, SC; and the University of Tennessee at Martin. He also assisted with the soils portion of the annual *Ag in the Classroom* program and was a member of the Environmental Conservation Club.

Caleb is from a small town in Tennessee named Smithville—located south of I-40, halfway between Nashville and Knoxville. Smithville sits near Center Hill Lake, a popular fishing and resort spot. Smithville's real "claim to fame" is the annual *Fiddler's Jamboree and Arts and Crafts Festival* held every summer on the 4th of July weekend (this small town of about 3,500 people fluctuates for about three days to facilitate about 100,000 people!).

His hobbies include hunting, fishing and just being outdoors. He also likes photography, landscaping, and enjoys reading. He's also a pretty big movie buff.

Caleb began his NRCS career as a student trainee for three summers. Other work experiences include all kinds of farm work, three years with the Farmer's Co-operative, as well as working in a welding shop, a grocery store, and a video store—some at the same time!

He enjoys traveling and seeing other places in the world beyond his front door. Welcome to SC NRCS Caleb!

George Sullivan, GIS Specialist, *Columbia, SC*

George Sullivan began his work with South Carolina NRCS after working several years with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources as a GIS Manager. During his time with SCDNR, he completed a long term project to develop a state-wide, multi-layered database (now available to the public through DNR's GIS Clearinghouse website).

Prior to working with SCDNR, Sullivan lived in Wisconsin and had the opportunity to work with the Wisconsin DNR and at an Agricultural Research Station in Hancock, WI. Most of his time at the research station was spent working with plant pathologists studying various methods to fight diseases in field crops.

He earned a degree in Environmental Science and enjoys many outdoor related activities including camping, fishing, hiking, and canoeing. He also enjoys working on his house in Forest Acres and recently began gardening. He is a native of the Columbia area and says he's fortunate to have several family members living close by in the Southeastern US.

"Everyone here at NRCS has been extremely helpful during my first couple of months on the job and I'm very excited about the prospects of advancing GIS within the agency in SC. I look forward to working with many of you in the future!"

Re-Sizing Photographs in Microsoft Photo Editor

by Chris Coulon, NRCS public affairs specialist, Michigan, reprinted with permission

After taking digital photos with your NRCS Olympus digital camera, you may notice that taking the photo is only part of the process involved in digital photography. After you take the shot, you may decide you want to use it in a publication.

Last month, I received a call from a field office requesting assistance in determining the size of the digital photo taken. The person was going to use the photo in a professional publication and the editor of the publication said he needed the photo resolution to be 300 dpi (dots per inch). How can you tell if the photo meets this requirement?

There are many ways to determine the resolution of the photo after you have stored the photo on your computer. Here, I will explain the process for determining resolution using Microsoft Photo Editor. All NRCS field offices with Windows XP have this software available.

First, you must open the photo in Photo Editor. Photo Editor can be located from the start button in the bottom left corner of your screen. Select "All Programs," "Microsoft Office Tools," and you will see "Microsoft Photo Editor." To open your photo, open from the "File" menu (you have to remember where you stored your photo to do this!)

When the photo is open, again use the "File" menu and select "Properties." This will bring up a dialogue box with an area showing the image resolution. The resolution is listed in an editable box as a number of pixels per inch.

You can change the resolution here. For example, if you want a picture to have 150 dpi and the number in the box is 300, simply type 150 over 300 and click OK. One caution—you should never *increase* the resolution of a photo in this manner! You can only decrease the resolution of a photo to make it smaller, but you cannot enlarge the dots per inch, or the photo will look grainy and distorted.

Once you have selected the resolution you want, you can see what output size this resolution corresponds with. If you have a 300 dpi photo that is 3" x 5", when you decrease the resolution the output size will increase to something like 8" x 10".

If you want a smaller output size, you will need to decrease it manually. To do this you use the "Image" menu and use the "resize" option. This will give you the photo size in inches by length and width. You will notice that these are also editable boxes. You can physically change the output size here.

Hopefully, this little tutorial will assist you with digital photo editing.

Conservation Photo Contest!

The NRCS Public Affairs Team is pleased to announce the1st 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.

First SC Soil Conservation Technician Completes NRCS Career Intern Program

by Sabrenna Bennett, NRCS public affairs assistant

At NRCS, potential employees are getting their foot in the door by taking advantage of opportunities offered through the Career Intern Program. This program, which is new in South Carolina, prepares men and women of various professional and technical backgrounds for service with the agency through two years of extensive training. Upon successful completion of this program, interns are converted to a permanent federal position.

"Through this program, I have gained a greater awareness of the NRCS mission and my technical skills have also grown through hands-on experience in the field."

-Odessa Sirman, NRCS Soil Conservationist

Odessa Sirman, former soil conservation technician in the St. Matthews office, is South Carolina's first employee to successfully complete this program. She has been promoted to a career conditional appointment as a Soil Conservationist, and recently moved to the Walterboro NRCS office. "Through this program, I feel that I have gained a greater awareness of the NRCS mission and my technical skills have also grown through hands-on experience in the field," stated Sirman.

Sirman is originally from a small town in Orangeburg County, SC, named Eutawville. It is here that she gained her first insight into conservation, growing up at her family farm.

She graduated from South Carolina State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agribusiness in 2001, and through an acquaintance, heard about NRCS. Her love of nature and concern for natural resources conservation compelled her to seek employment with NRCS.

Fort the past two years, she has excelled on the job and proven that she deserves to be promoted to the next level.

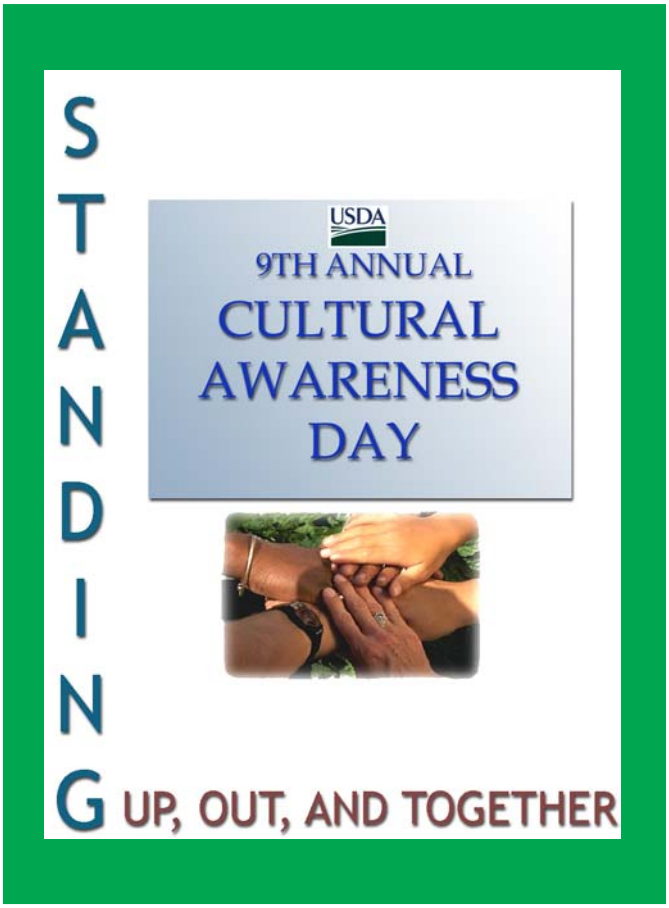
Sirman looks forward to a long career with NRCS, and is thankful for the intern program which helped her reach her goals. For more information about this program, visit www.opm.gov/careerintern.

SC's Civil Rights Committee Plans 9th Annual Cultural Awareness Day

The SC NRCS Civil Rights Committee is putting the finishing touches on the 9th Annual USDA Cultural Awareness Day. This year, the event will take place on August 26th at Saluda Shoals Park in Irmo, SC. The day long program will feature a variety of speakers including a discussion on the history of popular music in America, as well as topics on diversity and the changing face of the workplace. The theme is, *"Standing Up. Standing Out. Standing Together."*

This year, the event is being held in conjunction with USDA-Rural Development, and other invitees include, SWCD, SCDNR, and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) employees.

More information will soon be distributed via email. The planning committee looks forward to seeing you at this exciting event!



PERSONNEL NEWS

New NRCS Employees

♦ Caleb Gulley, GS-0470-7, Soil Scientist, Bishopville, effective April 4, 2004

♦ Christopher Graves, GS-0457-11, District Conservationist, Ridgeland, effective April 18, 2004

♦ George Sullivan, GS-0150-9, Geographical Information Specialist, Columbia, effective April 4, 2004

♦ Vickie Tatro, GS-0503-7, Financial Assistant, Columbia, effective May 2, 2004

Promotions

♦ Adline Crum, GS-0703-12, Budget Officer, Columbia, effective May 16, 2004

♦ Alerick Varner, GS-0457-5, Soil Conservationist, Bamberg, effective May 30, 2004

♦ Shawnn Balstad, GS-0457-13, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, Columbia, effective March 21, 2004

♦ Trinette Vereen, GS-0457-11, District Conservationist, Kingstree, effective May 2, 2004

Resignation

♦ Matthew Taylor, GS-0457-7, Soil Conservation Technician, Laurens, effective March 6, 2004

♦ Abena Scott, GS-0457-7, Soil Conservation, Newberry, effective June 12, 2004

Retirement

♦ Tommy Ginn, GS-0458-7, Soil Conservation Technician, Walterboro, effective June 3, 2004

Reassignment

♦ Alerick Varner, from Charleston to Bamberg, effective May 30, 2004

♦ Brian Hardee, from Charleston to Sumter, effective June 13, 2004

♦ Odessa Sirman, from St. Matthews to Walterboro, effective June 13, 2004

♦ Rafael Mendez, from Sumter to Newberry, effective June 13, 2004

♦ Collin Buckner, from Hampton to Greenville, effective July 25, 2004

♦ Shaun Worley, from Bennettsville to Conway, effective July 25, 2004

Soil Conservation Student Trainees

♦ Antron Williams, GS-0499-4, St George, effective May 5, 2004

♦ Crystal Hilton, GS-0499-3, Manning, effective May 16, 2004

♦ Jaime Keller, GS-0499-4, Greenville, effective May 16, 2004

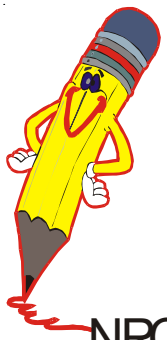
♦ Megan White, GS-0499-4, Conway, effective May 16, 2004

♦ Carly Showalter, GS-0499-3, Abbeville, effective May 16, 2004

left to right: NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas with student trainees Jaime Keller, Crystal Hilton, Megan White, Antron Williams, and Carly Showalter.

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
1835 Assembly Street, Room 950
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

FIRST CLASS



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