



# South Carolina's Current Developments

*Celebrating 70 Years of Conservation  
Helping People Help the Land*



From the Office of the  
State Conservationist  
*Walter W. Douglas*



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## **Dear NRCSers,**

By the time you read this edition of our newsletter, I will have spent my first week in the Lone Star State. NRCS Chief Arlen Lancaster requested my assistance as Acting State Conservationist for Texas and I gladly accepted. During my absence, NRCS State Administrative Officer Frank Wilcox will serve as Acting State Conservationist. I embraced this opportunity with absolute faith that the day-to-day operations of SC NRCS will be in very capable hands. I look forward to my experience in Texas and I know that it will be a unique learning opportunity. But, rest assured, I will return to South Carolina after the two month detail is complete.

I had the privilege of spending two days with the District Conservationists in Columbia in February. The DC's and the State Leadership Team engaged in a lively discussion during which they shared ideas, voiced concerns, and presented solutions.

During this meeting, a draft of the newly proposed watershed-focused staffing plan was presented. While still in development, we hope this plan can help us balance the demands of increasing workloads with a decrease in staff. As the plan evolves, we will keep NRCS staff and partners informed. Over the next two to three years, we hope to establish this watershed focused staffing plan in an effort to best serve the resource needs of our customers.

I look forward to returning to the state this spring. Until then, keep up the good work!

*Photo: Ann Bentley, Soil Conservation Technician, Charleston, SC*

# Notes from the Field



## 2007 SC Conservation Partnership Conference

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) and the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD), held its annual Conservation Partnership Conference January 3-6, 2007, at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach.

The conference began with a one-day symposium, *The Future of Renewable Energy in SC*, sponsored by the SC Soil and Water Conservation Society. Over one-hundred participants learned about biodiesel use for agriculture, green power, and USDA financial incentives for use of biodiesel and E-85. The SWCS symposium also drew a number of exhibitors, as well as media attention.

The Partnership Conference focused on the theme *Becoming Watershed Wise*. Topics discussed included the basics of watersheds and using grants to address watershed concerns. There was also a session on watershed success stories which included presentations from Chesterfield, Georgetown, and Jasper SWCD's.

The conference also included an awards luncheon where several individuals were recognized for their outstanding contributions to conservation. Krysta Harden, Chief Executive Officer, National Association of Conservation Districts, was the keynote speaker at the luncheon. There was also media coverage from Clemson University's "Your Day" radio show.



**SCACD Outstanding Conservation District**  
*The Lexington Conservation Partnership proudly accepted this year's award for Outstanding District.*



**SCACD Excellence in Outreach and Communication Award and Excellence in Education and Public Outreach Award**  
*The Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District received both awards for their outstanding efforts to educate the public about the importance of soil and water conservation.*



**SCACD Excellence in Resource Management and Conservation Award**  
*Thomas P. Riser, a livestock and poultry farmer from Newberry County, was recognized for his exemplary conservation efforts.*



**Outstanding District Employee Award**

Linda Pickering (right), Barnwell SWCD Administrative Assistant, received an award for her outstanding assistance to the Barnwell Conservation Partnership



**Conservation Partnership Employee of the Year**

Two NRCS District Conservationist were recognized for their contributions to the Conservation Partnership within their counties. Jeff Lucas (left), NRCS District Conservationist in Dorchester County, was one of the recipients of this

award. Mike Lott (below), Acting District Conservationist for Bamberg and Barnwell Counties, was the other recipient. NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas presented the awards to the winners.



**Outstanding District Commissioner Award**

William S. Simpson, III, Charleston SWCD Chairman since 1988, received this award for his efforts to help protect soil and water resources in Charleston County.



**SCACD High School Teacher of the Year**

Hugh Bland, an agriculture and environment educator for 25 years at Strom Thurmond High School in Edgefield, received this award for his exemplary dedication to teaching students about the importance of soil and water conservation.



**NRCS Small Farmer of the Year**

German Glasscho (center), a small farmer from Cades, SC (Williamsburg County), received the 2006 Small Farmer Award. Standing with him are NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas and Williamsburg NRCS District Conservationist Trinette Vereen. This award is presented to a deserving small farmer that demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and dedication to their community. Glasscho was also featured in a video presentation which was shown during the awards luncheon.

**SCACD Elementary Teacher of the Year**

Lisha Hylton (left), a third-grade teacher at Pelion Elementary in Lexington, received this honor for her dedication to teaching young minds about the environment and why conservation is important.



**Team NRCS Runs Marathon for Great Cause**

*Jonathan Todd, Florence NRCS Ag. Engineer*

On February 17, 2007, several SC NRCS employees and family members joined together in a team effort to participate in a 26.2-mile relay marathon in Myrtle Beach, SC. Each team member was responsible for running a five-mile leg of the total length, with one team member running a 6.2 mile leg. The marathon benefited The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Team NRCS raised close to \$300. They finished the marathon in 3 hours, 43 minutes, and 28 seconds, and came in 48th place out of 300. Way to go Team NRCS!



*(left to right) Nick Bataller (husband of Bishopville NRCS District Conservationist Lori Battaller), Erica Ballenger (daughter of Lori Battaller), Matthew Anderson (Florence NRCS District Conservationist), Jonathan Todd (Florence NRCS Ag. Engineer), and Larry Cantrell (Florence NRCS Field Engineer) formed Team NRCS to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society by running a marathon.*

**Partners for Trout Continues Efforts to Protect Trout Habitat**

*Dave Demarest, Foothills RC&D Coordinator*

*Partnership works to install cold water discharge in Pickens County*

A cold water discharge was recently installed on Reedy Cove Creek that will bypass water under-

neath Lake Chillywaters at Camp McCall (a summer camp for boys) in the mountains of South Carolina. RC&D Coordinator



Dave Demarest said, "This project was the most difficult in terms of engineering, as well as the most difficult to construct."

*This cold water discharge system will stop thermal pollution of the trout stream below the dam. This project improves water quality in the Reedy Cover Creek, and makes the habitat more suitable for trout.*

Started in October 2006, the project was recently completed in January of this year. Ross Stewart, NRCS Soil Conservationist in Pickens County, said the cost of installing the cold water discharge was \$100,800. The project will improve water quality in Reedy Cove Creek, located below the lake. "During the summer the sun heats the lake water and water temperatures can rise above 70 degrees. Most trout can survive only in water temperature below 70 degrees," explained Dan Rankin, SCDNR Biologist. The Reedy Cove Creek flows through the Jocassee Gorge, a pristine area owned and protected by the state of South Carolina

Technical Service Provider (TSP) and Engineer Gene Dobbins of North Wind Consultants devised the complex cold-water discharge system and supervised the construction. "Basically, an 18-inch pipe was tied into the existing concrete riser at the dam. The pipe was then buried 6-feet beneath the bottom of the lake and moves upstream for 1,600 feet underground. The pipe finally surfaces about 200 feet upstream of the back waters of the lake to pick up the cold water in the free-flowing Reedy Cove Creek. The underground pipe will pass the cold water mountain stream under the lake bed and release it downstream of the dam. There are two other smaller streams that feed this lake that will be

left untouched,” said Dobbins.

Funding for the project came from a donation by Jim Anthony, founder of The Cliffs Communities. “When something is given to you, you need to give it back,” Anthony said. “And this area has been very good to The Cliffs Communities and basically what we’re selling is clean water and a pristine lifestyle, so it’s only natural to give it back.”

*Partners for Trout* is a coalition of the Pickens, Greenville and Oconee Soil and Water Conservation Districts, landowners, Trout Unlimited, Foothills RC&D Council, and several federal and state agencies that have worked together for the past seven years. To date, 17 cold-water discharges have been installed to reduce thermal pollution caused by lakes and 4 miles of stream restoration projects have been completed. The total cost of these projects is \$1,100,000.

Foothills RC&D Chair Susan Guynn said, “Partners for Trout would like to thank the South Carolina Baptist Convention and all the landowners that allowed projects to be installed on their property that will help improve and protect South Carolina’s trout waters.”



*Partners for Trout is working to make the water downstream from Lake Chillywaters (in Rocky Bottom, SC-Pickens County), more suitable for trout by reducing thermal pollution.*

## Landcare Delivers!

◆ Looking for a brochure to hand out at an outreach meeting?

◆ Need lots of copies of a fact sheet, brochure, bookmark, or other promotional item?

Contact the **LANDCARE** office!

The LANDCARE office, located in Iowa, keeps a large inventory and processes orders for NRCS publications, forms and displays for NRCS employees and the general public.

Orders may be placed by calling 1-888-LANDCARE (1-888-526-3227), or by visiting <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

## Earth Team Volunteer Creates Web Page for East Piedmont RC&D

*Sabrenna Bryant, Public Affairs Specialist*

When it comes to the Earth Team, volunteers are asked to help where they are most needed. Sometimes this is in the field--getting conservation on the land--other times it’s in the office, helping to organize files. Regardless of the task, the SC Conservation Partnership utilizes volunteers to help people help the land and spread the message about the importance of soil and water conservation. East Piedmont RC&D Coordinator Reginald Hall found a creative way to use Earth Team volunteer talent. His volunteer, Cheryl Jelks, a Business and Marketing teacher at Columbia High, designed a website to promote the services of his RC&D Council.

Hall and Jelks were introduced at a community meeting where Hall learned that Jelks taught web development and design. He also found out that she wanted to teach her students more about natural resources and conservation. “These students will go on to further their education and take

jobs, but before they leave Columbia High I want them to have positive learning experiences," said Jelks. The East Piedmont RC&D website project was a great way to help the students learn about website creation, while at the same time learning about the importance of soil and water conservation.



Reginald Hall (left) and Earth Team volunteer Cheryl Jelks worked together, along with Columbia High students, to create a website for the East Piedmont RC&D.

Jelks did the bulk of the website design herself, utilizing several web development programs such as *Site Spinner* and *Frontpage*, but her students gathered information and photos pertaining to RC&D to help populate the page. Several months later, Jelks created a preliminary draft of the website and shared it with Hall.

"I was very impressed with the end result," said Hall. "Cheryl and her students did a great job describing the role and responsibility of the East Piedmont RC&D Council, and creating an impressive presence for our council which has the capacity to reach a large audience."

Jelks explained that website maintenance is still an on-going process and she plans to help Hall keep the website current. "This website design experience was a great learning process for both me and my students, and I think my days as an Earth Team volunteer are just beginning."

For more information, please visit [www.eastpiedmontrcd.com](http://www.eastpiedmontrcd.com) or contact the East Piedmont RC&D office at (803) 635-2757.

## National Ag. Day is March 21!

March 21st marks the first day of spring. It falls during National Ag Week, March 18-24, 2007, a time when producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America gather to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture.

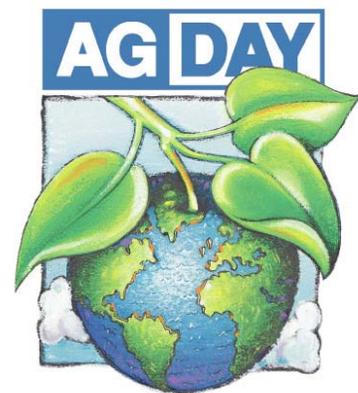
Why would individuals involved in agriculture volunteer time and energy to celebrate National Ag Day? If you're reading this, that question is probably moot! Like you, the Agriculture Council of America (ACA) and its supporters are committed to increasing public awareness about American agriculture. As the world population soars, there is even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in the United States.

The National Ag Day program believes that every American should:

- understand how food, fiber and renewable resource products are produced.
- value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.
- acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food, fiber and renewable resource industries.

The ACA is an organization uniquely composed of leaders in the agriculture, food and fiber communities dedicated to increasing the public awareness of agriculture's vital role in our society. They have a great web site about AgDay

which includes information on how to host a celebration, as well as a wealth of educational resources and contacts. Check it out at [www.agday.org](http://www.agday.org).





## News from Our Partners



### Largest Donation Ever by Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund to SCDNR

The S.C. Natural Resources Board, the policy-making body of SCDNR, met in Charleston on Friday, February 16, 2007. It was at this meeting that a monetary donation from the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund, Inc. was formally accepted. This year marked the largest donation ever by the Harry Hampton Fund at \$179,425. That amounts to \$2,150,905 donated to SCDNR over the years.

The Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation which partners with SCDNR for the promotion of education, research, management and the administration of game and fish laws, which will benefit conservation of wildlife, marine and other natural resources in South Carolina. Funds are obtained solely through private donations and special promotional projects, fund-raising events and publications. Although some of the funds are donated to special projects run by the DNR, they are not used to replace any department programs already supported by appropriated money.

"The Harry Hampton Fund and DNR have a long history of partnership in preserving, enhancing and promoting the natural resources of South Carolina," said Hampton Board Chairman William L. (Sam) Hiott. "After all, our natural resources belong not just to us, but to future generations."



*Pictured: from the left, DNR Board Chairman Michael McShane, DNR Director John Frampton, and Harry Hampton Chairman William L. "Sam" Hiott during the February 16th board meeting.*

### Palmetto Sportsmen's Classic-- March 23-25th

The 23rd Annual Palmetto Sportsmen's Classic will be held at the State Fairgrounds in Columbia March 23-25. Doors will be open from noon to 8 p.m. Friday, March 23; from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, March 24; and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, March 25.

New and returning major attractions for 2007 are "Twiggy—The Water Skiing Squirrel," "The SwampMaster" Alligator Show, Okefenokee Joe, Roark Ferguson and Joe Kelly's display of North American Wildlife Collection and Southern Whitetail Collection. Also in 2007, the Classic will feature its second archery contest where participants may bring their own bow and arrows and compete in an archery contest sponsored by the Palmetto Archery Federation and the Lake Marion Archery Club.

Several free events include special seminars on deer hunting by South Carolina's own Joe Kelly, snakes by Okefenokee Joe, and native amphibians and reptiles; DNR's *Take One-Make One* trailer with air rifle and electronic shooting ranges and Bass Tub fishing technique demonstrations.

Admission to the 2007 Palmetto Sportsmen's Classic is \$6, and parking is \$2. Seniors 60 and over get in for \$5 while children 10 and under are admitted free. Visitors bringing five canned-food items for Harvest Hope Food Bank receive \$1 off admission.

For more information on the Palmetto Sportsmen's Classic, call the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Columbia office at (803) 734-4008 or visit [www.psclassic.com](http://www.psclassic.com).

**Meet SC NRCS' New State Engineer--  
Phillip Rippé**

**Phillip Rippé** has had quite a journey before landing here in Columbia. He grew up in Homestead, Florida (about 50 miles south of Miami). He joined the Navy's nuclear power program shortly after graduating high school. While enlisted, he applied for and was accepted into the ROTC program at the University of Florida. It was here that he met his wife, Cindy. Upon graduating from Florida with a B.S. in civil engineering he started his engineering career with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). After working for MDEQ, he joined a geotechnical consulting firm in Jackson, MS. While working he completed a Master's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Mississippi. Additional educational pursuits afforded him the opportunity to complete 30 hours of post-graduate studies at Virginia Tech in geotechnical engineering. Prior to joining NRCS in 2002, he worked as a geotechnical consulting engineer in Birmingham, Alabama.



*SC NRCS welcomes new State Engineer Phillip Rippé to the State Office staff.*

His career with NRCS started as the Area Engineer in Farmville, Virginia. Farmville is located in south-central Virginia in the Piedmont physiographic region. In 2004, he accepted the State Design Engineer position in Richmond.

He and his wife reside in Lexington with their two children (one born in Alabama and the other in Virginia). They are expecting another child in June. He looks forward to many years of service in South Carolina. Welcome to Phillip and his family!

**PERSONNEL NEWS**

**NEW EMPLOYEES**

*Ruthie Davis* was selected as the District Conservationist, GS-0457-11, for the Charleston Field Office, effective February 18, 2007.

*Roger Cooper* was selected as the District Conservationist, GS-457-11, for the Dillon Field Office, effective April 1, 2007. Previously, Roger was a Soil Conservationist in Kentucky.

**PROMOTIONS**

*Edward Mitchell* was promoted to Soil Conservation Technician, GS-0458-07, in the Walterboro Field Office, effective December 24, 2006.

*Emory Holsonback* was temporarily promoted to Resource Soil Scientist, GS-0470-12, in the Greenwood Soils Office, effective January 7, 2007.

**RESIGNATION**

*Michael J. Dandridge*, Office Automation Clerk in the Aiken Field Office, resigned effective November 30, 2006.

**PROMOTION/REASSIGNMENT**

*Jimmy Harris*, District Conservationist in the Dillon Field Office, was promoted and reassigned as a Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator, GS-0401-12, to the state of Georgia, effective December 10, 2006.

*Clifford Eaddy*, District Conservationist in the York Field Office, was selected as the District Conservationist for the Manning Field Office, GS-457-11. His new assignment begins April 29, 2007.

**RETIREMENT**

*Dennis DeFrancesco*, Soil Scientist, GS-0470-12, in the Greenville Soils Office, retired effective January 3, 2007.

*Ellis Morrow*, Assistant State Conservationist (Operations), GS-0457-13, in the State Office, retired effective January 3, 2007

*Peter Zeck*, Program Manager, GS-040-12, in the Aiken Field Office, retired effective December 3, 2006.

*Ronnie Feaster*, State Resources Conservationist, GS-0457-13, in the State Office, retired effective January 3, 2007.



# Conservation Photo Contest Winners



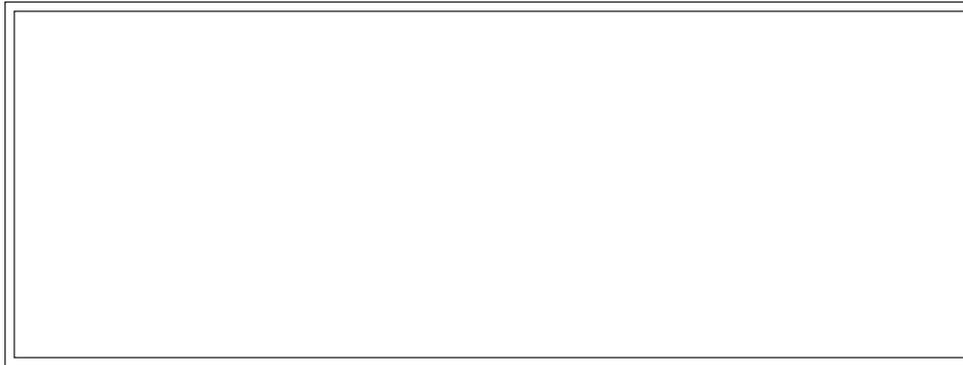
**Harden Swamp in Chesterfield County**  
*Justin Rivers, Soil Conservation Technician, Chester*



**Pelican at rest**  
*Ben Stuckey, Retired SC NRCS  
State Soil Scientist*



**Bobwhite quail**  
*Ann Bentley, NRCS Soil Conservation  
Technician, Charleston*



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*Current Developments is published quarterly.*

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