



SOUTH CAROLINA'S CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

A Legacy of Conservation
Helping People Help the Land
for 75 Years



USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Spring 2010



Keisha L. Brown
SC NRCS
State Conservationist, Acting

Greetings NRCsers,

It is great to be back in the South. I am honored for the opportunity to lead NRCS operations here in South Carolina. In the few short months I have been here, I have been blessed with the opportunity to meet most of our employees and partners. Thank you so much for the Southern hospitality you extended to me as I tour the state.

I visited four of the nine watershed teams, including 12 field offices and a soil survey project office. I appreciate you taking time from your busy schedules to take me out in the field to see some of our projects and meet with clients, introduce me to partners, and share your thoughts on state operations.

Speaking of partners, I cannot say enough about the Conservation Partnership here in South Carolina. I am impressed by the collaborative efforts at both the state and field level to work together and leverage resources to address the conservation needs in the state. Thank you so much for your commitment to helping people help the land as a team.

I am excited when I think of the future of South Carolina. With all the new leadership changes, we have an incredible opportunity to evaluate our processes and make positive changes to improve overall operations. We are looking forward to serving you as best we can.

I do have all the watershed teams on my schedule and look forward to meeting the rest of you. I'm not sure just how long I will be in the Palmetto State, but I am really enjoying my time. Both the people and the weather have been wonderful!

Thanks again for welcoming me so warmly.

Yours in Conservation,

Keisha

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Notes from the Field



Southeastern Goat & Sheep Seminar April 17th in Anderson, SC

The Southeastern Goat and Sheep Seminar is set for Saturday, April 17, 2010, at Pendleton High School in Anderson, South Carolina. Small ruminant producers, veterinarians, conservationists, and others are encouraged to take advantage of this educational opportunity that will highlight topics including herd health, goat nutrition and feeding, measuring and controlling parasite loads, breeding, and food regulations. Brandon DuRant, NRCS Soil Conservationist in Anderson County, will attend and distribute information about Farm Bill programs. For more details, visit www.southerngoatproducers.org.



SC Farm Service Agency Expands Scope of SAFE Project

FSA Executive Director Laurie C. Lawson announced that a conservation practice available through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is now expanded to more areas of eligibility within South Carolina. The practice, State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement, or SAFE, is also known as CP38. The expansion includes the counties of Calhoun, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Williamsburg. These are in addition to the original counties of Allendale, Bamberg, and Barnwell.

South Carolina has an initial allotment of 2,300 SAFE acres which will establish and maintain native early successional habitat on cropland to benefit certain bird species like Eastern mead-

owlark, Eastern towhee, brown thrasher, painted bunting, indigo bunting, and American woodcock. The practice can also provide nesting and brood rearing habitat for wild turkey, feeding, bedding, and fawning sites for deer, and can provide protection against erosion and protect water quality.

Eligibility requirements that are applicable to CRP will apply, including cropping history. FSA will take applications beginning April 1, 2010. Approved applicants will receive annual rental payments for ten years, a signup bonus of \$100 per acre, and cost-share and practice incentive bonuses.

For more information, including detailed practice and eligibility requirements, contact the local approved SAFE FSA County Office.

The Edgefield Partnership Garden

by Lee Nicholson, Soil Conservation Technician,
Edgefield NRCS

When it comes to challenges, the employees of the Edgefield Conservation Partnership are always ready. So, last year, on the 200th birthday of President Abraham Lincoln, when Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced the establishment of the People's Garden Project in honor of President Lincoln, we responded. Lincoln called the Department of Agriculture "the people's department."

Edgefield FSA employee Virginia Johnson

first to read the announcement about the People's Garden Project, and she was really excited about the idea and asked me to help. We also asked our fellow employees to pitch in, including former District Conservationist Shaun Worley (now a Programs Specialist in the State Office), SC Department of



Employees of the Edgefield USDA Service Center planted a Partnership Garden in response to Secretary Vilsack's challenge to USDA employees.

Natural Resources Program Coordinator Neil Bartley (retired), and Edgefield Soil and Water Conservation District Administrative Assistant Kelly Hyler.

First, the area was cleared of shrubs and brush. This was done with help of a local farmer. The area was tilled and rich soil was added. The soil was donated by a dairy farmer. The next step was planting of cabbage, collards, snow peas, onions, broccoli and turnips. Wheat straw was then added to prevent erosion and to hold moisture for the plants. The straw was also donated by a local farmer.

The People’s Garden of the Edgefield USDA Service Center was named “The Edgefield Partnership Garden,” and it lived up to its name.

We invite you to stop by the Edgefield Service Center, slow down, and take a look. It may be small, but it has lots of heart. With Spring just around the corner, harvesting and planting begins soon.

To learn more, visit www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden.



**South Carolina Earth Team
Celebrating 25 Years of Service!**

2010 marks a very special occasion for NRCS and the Earth Team. As the agency commemorates its 75th anniversary, the Earth Team celebrates 25 years of volunteers helping to put conservation on the ground.



The Earth Team program is going strong and is continuing to thrive nationwide, as well as in the state of South Carolina.

The FY 2009 annual SC Earth Team report reflected the following figures--

Number of SC Earth Team Volunteers: 125

Number of Volunteer Hours: 4,758

Number of SC Offices Using Volunteers: 18

During 2009, the national Earth Team Office implemented major changes in the way that Earth Team hours were recorded and reported with the design of a national database. This database helps the national Earth Team office keep accurate records of volunteers and hours served in each state.

In turn, South Carolina then assigned area Earth Team coordinators (organized by watershed) to help keep track of volunteers and hours.

It is important that the individual within each field office, whether it is the district conservationist, District personnel, etc, submit their monthly hours to this designated volunteer hour timekeeper. These individuals then submit these reports to Earth Team Coordinator Sabrenna Bryant in the State Office. Here is a listing of these important coordinators:

<u>Area Coordinator</u>	<u>Watershed and Field Office</u>
-Kimberly Arrington	Wateree (Sumter FO)
-Dorothy Branyon	Pee Dee (Bennettsville FO)
-Daniel Cabaniss	Savannah(Greenwood FO)
-Linda Creel	Tyger (Greenville FO)
-Lane Colson	Salkehatchie (Lowcountry RC&D Office)
-Jackie Heuermann	Catawba (Lancaster FO)
-Kelly Hyler	Saluda (Edgefield FO)
-Robin Munnerlyn	Lower Pee Dee (Georgetown FO)
-Linda Pickering	Edisto (Barnwell FO)

National Volunteer Week is April 18-24, and all SC Earth Team Coordinators are encouraged to recognize and express appreciation to volunteers in their watershed teams. The national office has developed a packet of materials which SC Earth Team Coordinator Sabrenna Bryant has made available. Please contact her if you need assistance with volunteer week activities, or anything relating to our volunteer program.

**40 Years of Celebrating Earth Day
April 22, 2010**

Earth Day, celebrated April 22, is a day designed to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth’s environment. It was founded by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisconsin) as an environmental teach-in in 1970 and is celebrated in many countries every year.



Earth Day 2010 can be a turning point to advance climate policy, energy efficiency, renewable energy and green jobs. It is a pivotal opportunity for individuals, corporations and governments to join together and create a global green economy. Join the more than one billion people in 190 countries that are taking action for Earth Day.

What do you do for the earth? For more information and some neat resources for celebrating Earth Day, visit www.earthday.net.

69th Annual SC Conservation Partnership Conference

January 20-21, 2010

The January 2010 SC Conservation Partnership Conference took place in Hilton Head, and featured a diversity of speakers, topics, and an awards luncheon. The week started with the SC Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society (SWCS) symposium, *Farming Naturally*. The Joint Conference then was kicked off with a very interesting presentation by NRCS National Historian from Washington, DC, Douglas Helms. He provided a historical overview of the agency, including the role which South Carolina has played in the conservation movement.

The Conservation Partnership Employee of the Year Award was presented to Lee Nicholson, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician in Edgefield County, and the Oconee County SWCD was recognized as the Outstanding District of the Year. SC NRCS employees also gathered for a meeting with East Regional Conservationist Leonard Jordan, SC NRCS Acting State Conservationist Keisha Brown, and Regional Assistant Chief for the East Walt Douglas.



SC NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Operations Doug Deaderick discussed Farm Bill programs.



Oconee SWCD-District of the Year



East Regional Conservationist Leonard Jordan



Keisha Brown, Acting State Conservationist, presented Lee Nicholson with the Conservation Partnership Employee of the Year Award.



Douglas Helms, National Historian, Washington, DC

SC NRCS employees share a laugh with former State Conservationist Walt Douglas who now serves as the Regional Assistant Chief for the East.



March is Women's History Month

Spotlight on SC's Own Eliza Lucas Pinckney

by Myra Jones, Laurens County Soil Scientist and Federal Women's Program Manager for the SC NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee

Did you know? Eliza Lucas Pinckney was perhaps the nation's first important agriculturist, and ran three South Carolina plantations at sixteen.

I am certain you have all heard of the following individuals:

Charles Pinckney – a prominent planter, lawyer, politician and Chief Justice;

Thomas Pinckney – a Revolutionary War officer, later a general and the United States Minister to Spain and Great Britain; and

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney – a general in the Revolutionary War and a signer of the United States Constitution.

However, have you ever heard of Eliza Lucas Pinckney? She was the wife of Charles Pinckney and mother of Charles Cotesworth, Thomas and a daughter Harriott. Eliza not only raised remarkable children but she also played a major role in South Carolina's economy at the time through her role in agriculture!

Eliza was formally trained at a finishing school in England where botany was her favorite subject. After moving to South Carolina as a teenager with her family, her father soon left her completely in charge of three plantations when he was called back to Antigua. From Antigua, her father sent her some indigo seeds. She spent numerous years perfecting these seeds and devised a method of making blocks of indigo cakes for dye. Eliza then shared all of her research with neighboring farmers. This helped to make indigo

a major cash crop since rice had been overproduced.

Throughout Pinckney's life she experimented with other agricultural ventures such as hemp, flax and she even planted a fig orchard. She also revived the silk culture in the Lowcountry. Eliza was a very smart and innovative lady who taught her

March is Women's History Month and the theme is "Writing Women Back Into History."

younger sister and her children, as well as black children, to read and write. She studied music and art, wrote many letters, and studied enough law to draft legal wills for area residents.

She died in 1793 and was buried in Philadelphia where she was receiving medical treatment. Most prestigiously, President George Washington requested to serve as a pallbearer at her funeral. More recently, Eliza was inducted into the South Carolina Business Hall of Fame in 1989 becoming the first woman so honored!

March is Women's History Month and this year's theme is "Writing Women Back Into History." I hope you will

take time to learn more about Eliza Lucas Pinckney, as well as other outstanding women that had a positive impact on our country.

The Federal Women's Program (FWP) is an integral part of the overall equal opportunity program at NRCS. It is coordinated through the National Federal Women's Program Manager (NFWPM), who serves as the principal staff advisor to the Director of the Civil Right Division on legislation, policies, employment and program issues impacting women.



Pinckney spent years perfecting indigo seeds and devised a method of making blocks of indigo cakes for dye, which she then shared with neighboring farmers, thus helping to make indigo a major cash crop since rice had been overproduced.

Women and the Soil Survey

from *Profiles in the History of the U.S. Soil Survey*; 2002 Iowa State Press; Chapter 5: *Opening Opportunities: Women in Soil Science and the Soil Survey* by Maxine J. Levin

submitted by Emory Holsonback, Laurens, SC

Women have been a part of the soil survey from its beginning in 1899. Although many served in office positions in supporting roles, it did not take long before the first woman was assigned to the field. In 1901, Julia R. Pearce became a member of the soil survey party in Hanford, California. However, her supervisor did not feel comfortable with her working in the field with an all-male crew, so he kept her inside copying maps. In 1903, she became an assistant in soil survey at the Bureau of Soils in Washington.

It would be 45 more years before the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) would hire another woman as a field soil scientist. In 1946, Mary C. Baltz graduated from Cornell University and became a "junior soil surveyor". During her career she mapped in Madison and Oneida Counties, New York.

During the 1950s and 1960s, very few women sought careers in soil science. Some of the ones who did would come via other occupations such as geology. Women were not being actively recruited as soil scientists in SCS. Even during the 1970s, SCS had less than 15 women in the GS-470 series (Soil Science) at any one time.

It was not until 1988 that Carol Wettstein became SCS's first woman State Soil Scientist. She served as State Soil Scientist in Maryland and Colorado. During the 1990s, the number of women in soil survey leadership positions increased significantly. They were serving as Soil Survey Party Leaders, Soil Correlators, and in Technical Soil Services positions.



Myra Jones
Soil Scientist
Laurens, SC

In 1998, there were 94 women Soil Scientists in NRCS. Today there are 143, which is 18% of the total. Currently in NRCS, nearly half of the newly hired Soil Scientists are women. In South Carolina, 40% of the Soil Scientists are women and three of the last four newly hired Soil Scientists are women.

Over the past one hundred years, there have been great strides in increasing the number of women in soil science. However, with only 18% of women as Soil Scientists in NRCS, there is more work to be done to hire and retain qualified women Soil Scientists.

2010 Special Observances Calendar for April-August established by USDA

APRIL 18-24--NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK visit www.volunteer.gov.

APRIL 22--USDA TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS TO WORK DAY visit the *Take our Daughters and Sons to Work Foundation website* at www.daughtersandsonstowork.org/wmspage.cfm?parm1=485

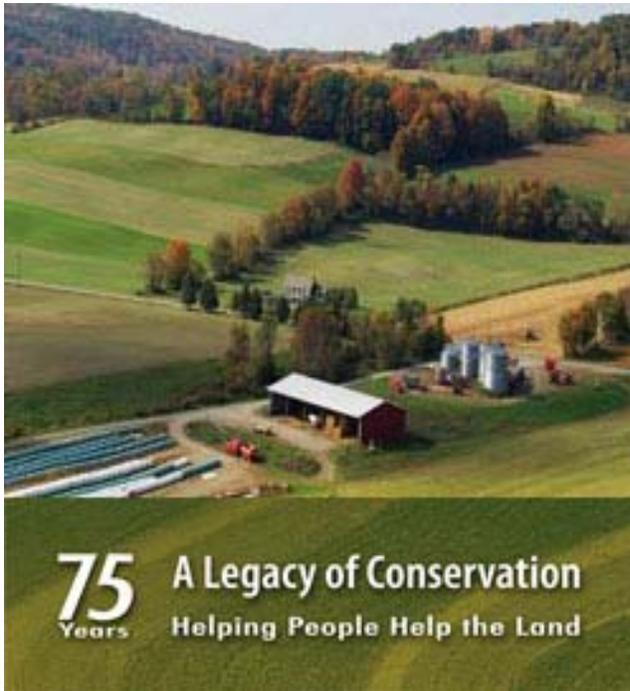
APRIL 27--Happy Birthday NRCS! 75 Years of Excellence.

MAY--ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH visit the Library of Congress Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month page - www.loc.gov/topics/asianpacific/

JUNE--LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER PRIDE MONTH visit <http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/blgaylesproc.htm>

and USDA Gay and Lesbian Employee Advisory Council - www.ascr.usda.gov/usda_employee_gleac.html

AUGUST 26--WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY
Learn more at www.nwhp.org/resourcecenter/equalityday.php.



A Conservation Legacy Reaching Back to 1935

2010 marks the 75th anniversary of NRCS and the beginning of the federal commitment to conserving natural resources on private lands.

Originally established by Congress in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), NRCS has expanded to become a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges, like climate change.

Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned, making stewardship by private landowners absolutely critical to the health of our Nation's environment.

*In the words of the first NRCS Chief
Hugh Hammond Bennett –
“If we take care of the land, it
will take care of us.”*



Gaffney, SC, Sunny Slopes Farm, 1956.



Spartanburg, SC, street parade on Armistice Day, November 1935. The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) float was made of chicken wire and plaster.

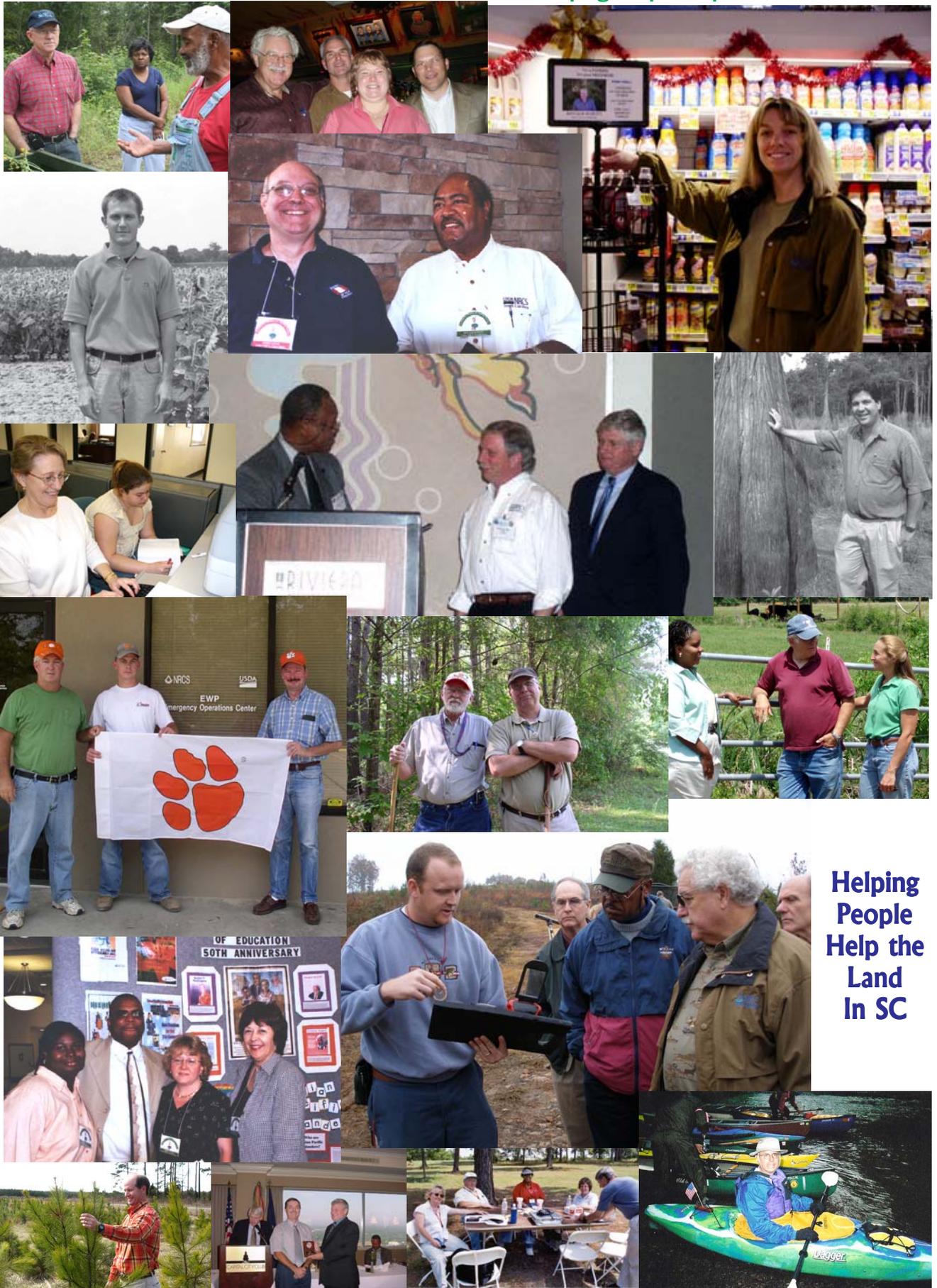


Spartanburg, SC, 1942. High school students get a lesson in soil structure from SCS technician W. H. Fleming.

A Legacy of Conservation

A look back at SC NRCS Over the Past Ten Years. Our People. Our Legacy.





Helping
People
Help the
Land
In SC



Conservation Photo Contest Winners



"Snow Day,"

by *Dennis DeFrancesco, retired
SC NRCS Soil Scientist.*



"Oro in the Snow,"

by *Emily Pohlman, NRCS, Aiken, SC.*



"Spring Has Sprung,"

by *Collin Buckner, NRCS, Greenville, SC*



"Snow Lake,"

by *Amy O. Maxwell, NRCS,
Columbia, SC*



*"Myrtle Beach in the
Snow,"*

by *Wayne
Henderson, NRCS,
Spartanburg, SC*



SC NRCS Gets Noticed at EdVenture Children's Museum's FARMVILLE Event

SC NRCS was proud to participate in the first ever **Farmville** at EdVenture Children's Museum in Columbia, SC, on March 20, 2010. Hosted on National Agriculture Day, the event was an outdoor festival featuring an array of exhibits and hands-on activities for children and their parents. Celebrating agriculture in the Palmetto State was the order of the day, and SC NRCS did just that! We went all out to draw attention and distribute information about the services that NRCS provides, and hopefully attracted some of the young children into considering a career with the agency. The exhibit featured a national display borrowed from Iowa highlighting the agency's 75th birthday this year, and thanks also goes to Newberry Soil & Water Conservation District Education Coordinator Annette Davis for letting us borrow the farm animal

hand puppets as well as the Sammy Soil and Ruby Raindrop mascot costumes. Special thanks to Sabrenna Bryant, Debra Cox, Jackie Reed, and Charlie Ogg who came out to man the exhibit and sport the cool costumes. This was outreach at its best, and the NRCS exhibit was extremely popular.

Right: SC NRCS Public Affairs Specialist Sabrenna Bryant tried out Ruby Raindrop's costume, and below, kids are treated to a farm animal puppet show performed by Bryant and Debra Cox.



Left to right: SC NRCS Soil Scientist Jackie Reed as Sammy Soil, SC NRCS Soil Scientist Charlie Ogg as himself, and Lee County SWCD Education Coordinator Debra Cox as Ruby Raindrop, entertained the crowd at EdVenture Museum's 1st Annual Farmville in Columbia, SC.

Personnel News

New Employees

Jill Epley was selected as a Resource Conservationist, GS-0457-12, in the State Office, effective February 14, 2010.

Keisha Brown was temporarily promoted as Acting State Conservationist, GS-0401-14, in the State Office effective January 3, 2010.

Promotions

Eddie Martin was promoted to Civil Engineer, GS-0810-12, in the Greenville Field Office, effective January 3, 2010.

Daniel Cabaniss was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, in the Greenwood Field Office, effective January 17, 2010.

Ann Bentley was selected and promoted to Soil Conservationist Technician, GS-0458-08, in the Charleston Field Office, effective January 17, 2010.

Kellee Melton was selected and promoted to ASTC (Programs), GS-0457-13, in the State Office, effective January 17, 2010.

Larry Cantrell was promoted to Civil Engineer, GS-0810-12, in the Florence Field Office, effective January 3, 2010.

Rich Williamson was selected and promoted to Soil Conservationist Technician, GS-0458-08, in the Sumter Field Office, effective January 31, 2010.

Robbie Newman was selected and promoted to Soil Conservationist Technician, GS-0458-08, in the Camden Field Office, effective January 17, 2010.

Scott Glenn was promoted to Civil Engineer, GS-0810-12, in the Chester Field Office, effective January 3, 2010.

Shaun Worley was selected and promoted to Program Specialist, GS-0457-12, in the State Office, effective January 17, 2010.

Tricia McCalla was promoted to Budget Analyst, GS-0560-11, in the State Office, effective February 28, 2010.

Yasmin Bennett was promoted to Civil Engineer, GS-0810-12, in the Walterboro Field Office, effective January 3, 2010.

Reassignment

Michael Sampson, Soil Conservationist in the Newberry Field Office, transferred to Georgia as the NRCS State Forester, effective January 3, 2010.

Retirement

Bethel C. Durant, Programs Specialist, GS-0457-12 in the State Office, retired effective January 3, 2010.

Bobby McGee, Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-12 in the Savannah River Site Office, retired effective January 2, 2010.

Frank Wilcox, State Administrative Officer, GS-0341-13 in the State Office, retired effective January 2, 2010.

Niles Glasgow, State Conservationist, GS-0401-15 in the State Office, retired effective January 2, 2010.

Al McNeil, Hydraulic Engineer, GS-0810-12 in the State Office, retired effective January 2, 2010.