South Carolina's Current Developments

NRCS South Carolina

Helping People Help the Land

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service March 2008

From the Office of the State Conservationist

Niles Glasgow

In this issue...

- '08 Conservation Partnership Conference .....*pgs. 2-3*
- Indian Creek Wildlife Habitat Restoration .....*pg. 4*
- SC Earth Team Success Stories .....*pgs. 7-8*
- What is multiculturalism? .....*p. 9*
- Bishopville Soils Office Assist with National Book.....*pg. 10*
- Meet Our New Employees.....*pg. 11*
- Photo Contest .....*pg. 12*
- Personnel Update.....*pg. 13*

Dear SC Conservation Partnership,

I have enjoyed my first two months in South Carolina as the State Conservationist, and can honestly say that it is an honor to be a part of the SC Conservation Partnership.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to attend several meetings and conferences, stop by a few field offices, and speak with a number of NRCS employees and partners since I arrived in January. One thing is obvious—the SC Conservation Partnership is comprised of individuals who are committed to protecting the state's natural resources, and customer service is a priority. I'm proud to be a part of your team, and am excited about the conservation projects and successes that lie ahead.

As budgets are cut and we are asked to do more with less (resources, people, and money), SC NRCS perseveres even in challenging times, and I thank you for your continued dedication to getting the job done.

I challenge each of you to pay careful attention to ensuring that we reach or exceed our progress goals, and that we do everything we can to address the late rate issue in EQIP and WHIP.

Furthermore, as conservationists, it is our responsibility and duty to not only obligate funding for conservation practices, but to also follow through and get those practices on the ground. Let us commit to staying in close contact with our contract holders in an effort to ensure that the conservation plans we write are implemented.

Thanks for all that you do to help people help the land in the great state of South Carolina. I am delighted to be part of this devoted team of conservationists, and look forward to great things to come.

NILES T. GLASGOW

Notes from the Field

SC Conservation Partnership
Gathers in Myrtle Beach to Discuss *The Future of Our Water*

The 2008 South Carolina Conservation Partnership Conference took place January 16-18th in Myrtle Beach. *South Carolina at the Crossroads: The Future of Our Water* focused on the water quality/quantity challenges that SC may face in the near future and featured local, regional, and national conservationists discussing topics such as watershed assessment and defining and addressing concerns in impaired watersheds.

Tom Lester, a.k.a Eb Dawson from *Green Acres,* was the luncheon speaker on Wednesday and entertained the crowd with his insightful and humorous anecdotes.

NRCS State Conservationist Niles Glasgow presented the 2007 *Conservation Partnership Awards*, and this year's recipients included Catawba Watershed Area NRCS Supervisory District Conservationist Ann Christie, and Laurens County NRCS District Conservationist Lisa Good. Both employees were nominated by their respective Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's) for outstanding and exemplary service.

The conference was jointly sponsored by the SC Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD), USDA-NRCS, and the SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR).

Prior to the opening of the Partnership Conference, the SC Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) hosted a symposium entitled, *Smart Farming: The Basics of Precision Agriculture.* Guest speakers included Gene Hardee from the NRCS East National Technology Support Center in Greensboro, NC, and a farmer panel of producers who are currently utilizing precision ag. to enhance their operations.

SC NRCS State Conservationist Niles Glasgow (left) presented Catawba Watershed Area NRCS Supervisory District Conservationist Ann Christie (in photo on left) and Laurens NRCS District Conservationist Lisa Good (in photo on right) with SC Conservation Partnership Awards.

The Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District received the 2007 Outstanding Conservation District Award. Pictured left to right are SCDNR's Leslie Morgan, Pickens SWCD Commissioners David Norton, Larry Dyck, Roddey Gettys, and Amanda Bauknight. Not pictured: Commissioner Dale Powell, District Manager Sandy Elkins and NRCSers Ross Stewart and Hollis Berry.

The registration hall was a flurry of activity as the 2008 conference drew a record crowd!

2008 SC Conservation Partnership Conference

Wildlife Habitat Restoration
Improves Thousands of Acres in Newberry County

The Cooperative Conservation Partners of the Indian Creek Wildlife Habitat Restoration Initiative in Newberry, SC, hosted a guided tour on February 20, 2008.

The event highlighted partnership efforts among federal, state and local agencies/organizations which are in the process of restoring and improving habitat for declining species that depend on grasslands and similar habitats. The project was made possible through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) which provides landowners with technical and financial assistance to develop habitat for upland wildlife, threatened and endangered species, fish, and other wildlife in South Carolina.

The cooperative conservation project started in October 2004 when representatives from the USDA Forest Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) met to discuss a plan which would restore and improve wildlife habitat within Indian Creek.

The cooperating agencies initiated a landscape restoration project which sought to restore habitat for species that depend on grasslands, including bobwhite quail and songbirds such as prairie warbler, loggerhead shrike, and Bachman's sparrow.

National forest properties and privately-owned lands within the 16,000 acre project boundary are being restored and improved with conservation practices including pine stand thinning, prescribed burning, native warm season grass establishment and eradication of invasive species. Bird monitoring is also helping to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

NRCS State Conservationist Niles Glasgow said, "WHIP has improved and protected over 2 million acres of important wildlife habitat since it began in 1998. Indian Creek is a great example of what can happen when people and agencies work together in the name of conservation—the impact is huge, and the benefits will be great for a number of different wildlife species."

"Indian Creek is a great example of what can happen when people and agencies work together in the name of conservation—the impact is huge, and the benefits will be great for a number of wildlife species."

-Niles Glasgow
SC NRCS
State Conservationist

NRCS Regional Assistant Chief for the East Richard Coombe (left) and East Piedmont RC&D Coordinator Reginald Hall (right) presented a sign to a private landowner involved with the Indian Creek Initiative.

Above: Judy Barnes, SCDNR Wildlife Biologist and Indian Creek Initiative Project Coordinator, addressed a group of nearly 70 attendees for a tour of private-owned and National Forest land sites involved in the project.

This is one of the privately owned sites at Indian Creek where the USDA NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) provided financial and technical assistance to restore and protect valuable wildlife habitat for species like bobwhite quail and songbirds.

Environmental Discovery Center in Florence Highlights Nature and Conservation

by Sabrenna Bryant, SC NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

On February 22, 2008, the wonders of nature were revealed as the Florence Environmental Discovery Center in Lynches County Park was opened with a special ceremony and ribbon cutting. The Center is the result of four years of collaborative efforts between Florence County and the Florence Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

The 2,700 square-foot facility features environmental conservation intermingled with the latest technology. The building is LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) because it was constructed with recyclable building materials, such as lumber from old tobacco and horse farms. Although constructed with used and recycled materials, the interior of the building boast an array of technological gadgets.

Wall-mounted LCD monitors display the readings from outdoor weather stations, and an interactive touch video screen provides visitors with historical narratives from lifelong residents who grew up along the Lynches River.

There are other surprises including two treetop canopies linked by a hanging rope bridge offering gorgeous views of the lush forest that surrounds the Center.

The Environmental Discovery Center is open to the public and is free of charge. For more information, please contact the Florence SWCD at (843) 669-9686, ext. 115.

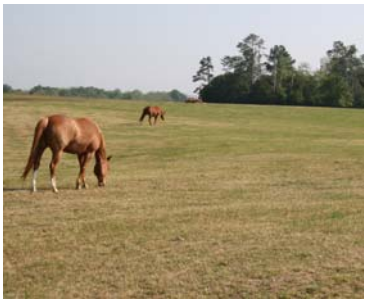
Florence County officials and supporters of the Environmental Discovery Center, including Florence SWCD manager Sterling Sadler (fourth from left), cut the ribbon during a special dedication ceremony.

East Piedmont RC&D to Cohost Equine Management Seminars for New and Experienced Horse Owners

Register by March 28th

A series of management workshops for horse owners has been organized by a partnership interested in educating equine enthusiasts about the proper care and management of horses.

The workshops will take place at the Clemson Sandhill Research & Education Center off of Clemson Road beginning April 3rd and will continue to meet Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. through May 8th. The Equine Management Workshops are sponsored by the East Piedmont Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council, Clemson Extension Service, The SC Department of Agriculture, SC Horsemen's Council and the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).



Early bird registration is due by March 28th and the cost of the six-week session is $60 ($80 after the 28th). Registrants can also pay for individual seminars at a cost of $15/each.

The workshop will educate horse owners on a broad range of topics including protecting horses during natural disasters, insurance and liability, transporting horses, proper care and feeding (including vaccinations), and pasture management. Participants will also receive information on technical and financial assistance available through the United States Department of Agriculture.

Registrants will receive notebooks containing speaker presentations. Space is limited. **Mail check or money order made payable to East Piedmont RC&D and mail to**: 2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A, Columbia, SC, 29202. Please include your name and contact information with your payment. For more information, or to receive a schedule breakdown of the seminar topics, contact fisherc@rcgov.us or call 803-576-2080.

Former National Park Service Director Addresses Foothills RC&D Council

The Foothills Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council invited Fran Maniella, immediate past director of the National Park Service (NPS-US Department of the Interior), to speak at their November 2007 council meeting. The agency's 16th director, and the first woman to lead the NPS, Maniella was appointed by President George W. Bush and has more than 40 years experience in park and recreation management. She worked alongside 20,000 employees and more than 125,000 volunteers.

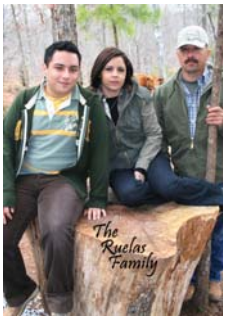
left to right: Michael Trotter, Jones Gap Park Manager, Fran Maniella, and Susan Guynn, Chair of the Foothills RC&D Council.

Director Mainella enhanced an agency already known for its dedication to its mission and its service to Americans and people around the world. She strengthened programs that preserve natural and cultural resources both inside and outside national parks. Under her leadership, the National Park Service reduced a massive maintenance backlog affecting 390 national parks, and worked to improve scientific research through an initiative known as the *Natural Resource Challenge*.

Before her NPS appointment, she applied her skills as director of Florida's Division of Recreation and Parks. During this time, Florida's State Parks became a model for volunteer and partnership programs. The National Sporting Goods Association and the National Recreation and Park Association honored Florida State Parks with their Gold Medal Award.

Presently, she serves as Visiting Scholar at Clemson University in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management. The Foothills RC&D Council enjoyed her presentation and especially enjoyed her story of riding on Air Force One with President Bush.

Edgefield County Family Nominated for *Hispanic Conservation Farmer of the Year*



The Ruelas family from Modoc, SC (Edgefield County), was visited by NRCS videographer Bob Stobaugh last month to be featured in a video award nomination. The NRCS Hispanic Emphasis Program is conducting its 1st annual Hispanic Farmer of the Year competition this year.

The Ruelas' were nominated by Edgefield NRCS District Conservationist Shaun Worley for their outstanding conservation ethic. The family farms thirty acres and they have improved their beef cattle operation with an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract which is helping them to implement pasture planting, cross fencing, water troughs, and prescribed grazing. Rafael Mendez, SC NRCS Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (HEPM) also assisted with the video shoot.

NRCS Celebrates National Women's History Month in March

by Lisa Good, SC NRCS Federal Women's Program Manager

In 1987, Congress declared March **National Women's History Month.** During this month, American women are recognized and celebrated in schools, workplaces, and communities throughout the country. The knowledge of women's history provides a more expansive vision of what a woman can do. This perspective encourages girls and women to think larger and bolder and can give boys and men a fuller understanding of the female experience. The 2008 theme is ***Women's Art: Women's Vision.***

This theme was chosen to honor the originality, beauty, imagination, and multiple dimensions of women's lives. The history of women and art is quintessential to women's history. Women make up 51 percent of the U.S. population. Incorporating women into history changes our understanding of the past in fundamental ways. Join us this month and celebrate the women who have brought art and vision to your life.

Partners for Trout Presented with *Palmetto Trout Award*

The South Carolina Council of *Trout Unlimited* presented the 2007 Palmetto Trout Award to *Partners for Trout*, a coalition comprised of the Pickens, Greenville and Oconee Soil and Water Conservation Districts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Trout Unlimited, private landowners, and the Foothills Resource Conservation & Development Council.

The group is committed to restoring and enhancing trout streams in South Carolina. The presentation was made by Tom McInnis, Trout Unlimited South Carolina Council Chair, during their fall meeting November 17, 2007, at Jones Gap Park.

McInnis said that Partners for Trout was being recognized for the long term partnership it has sustained with Trout Unlimited in South Carolina, and their shared interest in protecting South Carolina's rare trout waters.

Since its inception in 1997, Partners for Trout has implemented streambank, riparian and instream restoration on six miles of streams. One major project involved a half-mile of stream restoration on the Eastatoee Creek in the Jocassee Gorges region of northern Pickens County. The degraded stream channel was improved to allow more natural water flow, and to reduce erosion and provide cooling shade for the stream in the summer. Partners for Trout also installed seventeen bottom-water-release structures on dams, which improved water quality by reducing downstream water temperatures in the summer in more than 50 miles of streams.

Darrell Harrison, Foothills RC&D Council Secretary/Treasurer (center), accepted theTrout Unlimited Palmetto Award from SC Trout Unlimited Council representatives Tom McInnis, Chair, and Meta Armstrong, Chair Elect.

Susan Guynn, Chair of the Foothills RC&D Council, stated that the success of this project is due to the dynamic partnership that exists. Darrell Harrison, Secretary/Treasurer for the Council, accepted the award, on behalf of Partners for Trout's member organizations.

Earth Team Volunteers Help Restore Wetlands in Allendale County

by Sudie Daves Thomas, NRCS Wildlife Biologist

On February 15, 2008, USC Biology Professor Dr. Eran Kilpatrick and nine of his Earth Team students assisted in the restoration of a longleaf pine savanna in Allendale County.

A total of 331 acres of Lakeview Plantation (owned by the Simmons family) was entered into the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in 2006. Natural resource features found on their property include cypress ponds, longleaf pine savanna, and upland pine-wiregrass woodland.

Plant and animal diversity are particularly abundant at the site, however, plentiful wiregrass and longleaf pine were missing until recently. Small scattered patches of wiregrass were located on the site and seeds were collected in 2006. The Taylor Nursery in Trenton, SC, then grew 1,200 wiregrass plugs from the collected seeds. Restoration activities for the site included prescribed burning, spot clearing of shrubby areas in order to plant longleaf pine, planting of 6,000 longleaf pine saplings, and now, thanks to USC Earth Team students and their professor, 1,200 wiregrass plugs were planted.

Historically, longleaf pine forests once spread across the southeast from eastern Texas over to Florida, and up to Virginia covering an estimated 80 to 90 million acres. Only scattered remnants of intact longleaf communities remain (2-3 %). Wiregrass is typically found growing within longleaf pine forests, and grows in a bunchy form with over-arching leaves. Its primary function within the pine forests and savannas is to carry fire. These natural communities depend on fire for nutrient renewal in the soil, to promote flowering and seeding of many plant species, and to keep woody plant succession from shading out the plentiful herbaceous plants that exist and support numerous animal species.

Wiregrass also provides excellent nesting, travel, and escape cover for northern bobwhite, Bachman's sparrow, and many other birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

The restoration of the site has been successful due to the great partnership between NRCS and the landowners. The Simmons' are exemplary stewards of the land and demonstrate

their committment to conservation by practicing prescribed burning on a regular basis. Because of this, wiregrass, native grasses, and wildflowers are thriving at Lakeview Plantation.

Now, with the help of Earth Team volunteers from USC-Salkehatchie, the restoration of this area is underway, and field days are being planned in an effort to continue planting and also to inventory plant and animal life.

Two NRCS Earth Team Volunteers/USC Salkehatchie students plant longleaf pine savanna at a WRP site in Allendale County.

Trash to Treasure:

Earth Team Volunteer in Iraq Proves Conservation of Resources Can Happen Anywhere

submitted by Carol Murphy, Beaufort County Recycling Coordinator and former SWCD Education Coordinator and Earth Team Volunteer Program Supporter

Bill Murphy, a longtime Beaufort, SC, Earth Team Volunteer, knows that being stationed away from home can be tough, especially if you are thousands of miles from home in Iraq! Couple that with being in the middle of the desert, and you can imagine that homesickness is a real possibility! But Murphy, a Radar System Field representative for Lockheed Martin Corporation, is doing everything he can to make the situation bearable, and when faced with the need for temporary shelter from the hot (130 degrees is not out of the question!) and dry desert conditions, he got creative.

Murphy and his fellow Marines searched for used lumber and roofing materials over a period of four months in a quest to construct their own homemade shelter. Utilizing discarded plywood scheduled for incineration, they fashioned a 192 square foot recreation building with a roof made of old aluminum collected from a debris pile of demolished buildings. Disposable wood was also used to construct the deck, along with reused seats from a seven-ton truck to make benches inside the building. Murphy reports, "The building has served it's purpose well, providing a great shelter for the marines to work, read and store equipment."

Along with his eleven fellow Marines, Murphy is leading the effort to conserve and protect the environment by using recycled materials, thereby reducing waste and cutting down on the amount of waste, and potentially reusable products, that end up in landfills. The SC Earth Team salutes these innovate conservationists and exemplary servicemen.

Bill Murphy, a SC Earth Team Volunteer and Marine serving in Iraq, has put his conservation ethic to practice by constructing a recreation building with all recycled materials. The Marines use the structure in the middle of the Iraq desert to read, work, store equipment, and seek respite from the dry heat.

What is Multiculturalism?

by Lakeisha R. Hill, NRCS Black Emphasis Program Manager

This year's theme for Black History Month was **"Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism."** To further explore the term, multiculturalism, I turned to research compiled by Professor Gregory Jay of the Department of English at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, who said, "Historically, multiculturalism came into wide public use during the early 1980's in the context of public school curriculum reform. Specifically, the argument was made that the content of classes in history, literature, social studies, and other areas reflected what came to be called a "Eurocentric" bias. Few if any women or people of color, or people from outside the Western European tradition, appeared prominently in the curriculums of schools in the United States."

When we analyze our identities, we can break them up into numerous facets of ourselves, until it seems that Humpty Dumpty can never be put back together again. A person may think of herself or be treated at one moment as a woman, at another moment as Asian, at another moment as upper-class, at another moment as elderly, and so on—each time being either helped or hindered by the identification, depending on the circumstances. The various parts of our cultural identities may not add up to a neat and predictable whole. Multiculturalism, then, insofar as it groups individuals into categories, may overlook the practical reality that no one lives in just one box.

Aside from what Dr. Jay had to say, I wanted to know what people around me thought of when they heard the term multicultural. I solicited responses from a sampling of SC NRCS and other federal employees of different genders, races and age groups and asked them to tell me what came to mind upon hearing the word multicultural. "I automatically think of it pretty literally...'many cultures'. So, a multicultural event would mean to me, an event that highlighted many different cultures," remarked one respondent. Another employee said, "I think of a diversity of cultures." One participant said, "The United States is a multicultural nation and melting pot for the world. In thinking of the Olympics and the opening ceremonies, there is no other nation in the world with as many cultures represented at the Olympics as this great nation that we represent." Lastly multicultural was defined by one respondent as a "background of various upbringings." In my opinion all of these answers are correct. When it comes down to it, it becomes a matter of opinion what one person thinks versus what another person thinks on the subject.

A final question would be: Is multiculturalism the same as multiracialism or multiethnicity? Yes, if race or ethnicity equals culture, or no if culture is independent of race and ethnicity.

In my short time with SC NRCS I have witnessed the commitment to acknowledge, promote, and celebrate multiculturalism. Our annual USDA Cultural Awareness Day is one of the ways we celebrate and embrace our differences. Additionally, the NRCS State Conservationist appoints Special Emphasis Program Managers as part of the Civil Rights Committee to help carry out this commitment.

For a list of the NRCS Special Emphasis Program Managers, please visit www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/civil_rights.html.

The full article by Dr. Gregory Jay can be viewed at http://www.uwm.edu/~gjay/Multicult/Multiculturalism.html.

Bishopville Soils Office Participates in Update of Hydric Soils Guide

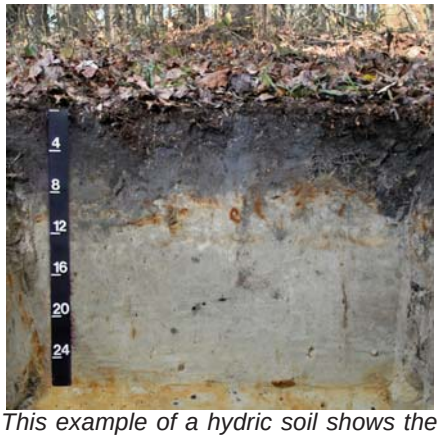
by Charlie Ogg, Soil Scientist, Lee County

Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States is being revised and soils from South Carolina may appear in the latest edition. The manual describes approved indicator criteria such as color requirements and horizon thickness necessary for documenting whether or not a soil is hydric. The guide also includes problem soil indicators undergoing evaluation for hydric conditions; that is, soils exhibiting unconventional physical properties but still meeting hydrology requirements. Since "pictures are worth a thousand words," photographs of hydric soils commonly found in wetlands appear along with each indicator so users can see the features and properties discussed in the text. Photographs will be consistently displayed with standard, legible scales. Photo quality will be improved, i.e. images will not have shadows and will be sharper.

SC NRCS Soil Scientists Jackie Reed (left) and Caleb Gulley hold a sheet behind NC NRCS Soil Scientist John Kelley to block sunlight. The sheet, used in conjunction with the camera flash, provides uniform lighting and reduces shadows to enhance photo quality.

During the week of November 26, 2007, the MLRA Office 14-3 soils staff, Bishopville, hosted John Kelley, soil scientist from Raleigh, NC. Other NRCS participants were Ron Morton, Resource Soil Scientist, and Pam Thomas, State Soil Scientist. Kelley collected numerous photographs from Lee, Sumter, and Georgetown counties. Shallow pits were dug to expose vertical profiles. Horizons, colors, and special kinds of redoximorphic features were documented photographically. In Lee and Sumter counties, sites were located in blackwater swamps, upland depressions, and on the Lynches River floodplain. Debbie Mann, NRCS District Conservationist in Georgetown, provided access to Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Resources, through Dr. Tom Williams, Professor of Forest Resources. Dr. Williams guided the group to excellent examples of the Leon Series where he collected several consecutive years of water table data, documenting both the hydric and non-hydric end members of the series. The Leon Series is known for exhibiting the classic "salt and pepper" hydric criteria in the surface layer.

The 2007 drought, as bad as it was for agricultural water supplies, provided unprecedented opportunity throughout the Southeast to access and photograph virtually inaccessible soils usually ponded with water. In addition to sites in South Carolina, Kelley obtained exemplary photographs of organic soils in the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia earlier in the Fall. Kelley's photographic adventures have taken him to Florida as well. He will travel to the upper Midwest in late Spring and Alaska during the Summer of FY08. The new guide is tentatively scheduled for release sometime in FY09 after the National Technical Committee for Hydric Soils approves the product.



This example of a hydric soil shows the quality of the images that will appear in the revised guide.

Santee-Wateree RC&D Helps Restore Pocotaligo Swamp

For more than twenty years, the Clarendon and Sumter Soil & Water Conservation Districts, with help from partner entities like Santee Wateree RC&D, have worked together to restore the Pocotaligo Swamp. The Pocotaligo Swamp Reclamation Committee was formed to develop and implement a plan which would restore the natural wetland conditions of this important area back to its pre-1950 conditions--before the area was severely damaged by development.

In 1999, the committee received additional help and support from the US Army Corps of Engineers-Charleston District. Roy Todd, Coordinator for the Santee-Wateree RC&D Council, was also very instrumental in keeping the project on track.

Upon completion of the project, two stream channels within the swamp, consisting of approximately 30 miles, will be cleared and snagged to improve the water flow and water quality throughout the swamp. Work on the project has begun with two miles already completed through the use of an amphibious crane to remove unwanted debris.

The progress was celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday, January 30, 2008, on Twelve Bridges Road, where attendees could see the swamp in the background.

Project work begins at the confluence of Turkey Creek and the Pocotaligo River near the City of Sumter and extends to Highway 301 bridge near the City of Manning. The project is expected to be completed by June of 2008.

Roy Todd, Santee Wateree RC&D Coordinator, welcomed the crowd to the January 30th Pocotaligo Swamp Cermony.

Welcome New SC NRCS Employees

Tibor Horvath is the new Conservation Agronomist in the NRCS State Office.

Tibor Horvath is the new Conservation Agronomist in the SC NRCS State Office. He graduated in1985 with an MS in agricultural engineering from the Georgikon Agricultural University in Hungary.

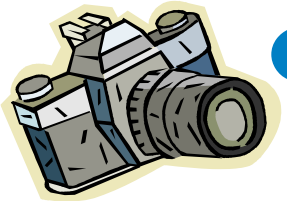
Horvath moved to the United States in 1991 to work for a private firm in Pennsylvania. His first job in the conservation field was with the Wyoming County SWCD in Pennsylvania as a nutrient management specialist. In 1998 Tibor accepted a position with the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program in New York, and worked there as an agricultural engineer until December 2000 when he was hired by the NY NRCS State Office as a civil engineering technician. It took only ten months for him to change his mind to become the NY NRCS Agronomist in November 2001.

Horvath was the president of the Empire Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) in 2006. He is a Certified Crop Advisor and loves to hike in the mountains on sunny cool days in the fall and the spring.

Beverly Alexander is a new Administrative Assistant in the NRCS State Office.

Beverly Alexander is the new Adminstrative Assistant for Programs and Public Affairs in the NRCS State Office. Born and raised in Spartanburg, SC, she served three years and six months in the US Army where she traveled overseas to Germany and throughout the United States. She earned her Bachelor's Degree from Wayland Baptist in San Antonio, Texas, while working for the Internal Revenue Service. She then moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin, where she was employed by the Department of Public Instruction.

Beverly enjoys reading, watching television, and being outdoors. She also spends as much time as possible with her parents in Spartanburg, and also has two sisters (one is her twin!) and brother. She said she is very excited to be working for NRCS.



Conservation Photo Contest Winners

Pelican, *by Ann Bentley,*
NRCS Soil Conservation Technician,
Charleston, SC

Snake, *by Phillip Rippe,*
NRCS State Conservation Engineer,
Columbia, SC

Getting in Touch with Nature,
by Arnold Ruelas,
Fox Creek High School Student
and son of Victorand Lety Ruelas
(SC nominees for Hispanic Conservation Farm Family of the Year)
Modoc, SC

Sunset,
by Bruce Andrews
Chester County NRCS
District Conservationist

PERSONNEL NEWS

New Employees

Beverly Alexander was selected as an Office Automation Assistant, GS-0326-05, in the State Office, effective January 6, 2008.

Corry Calderone was selected as a Soil Scientist Career Intern, GS-0470-07, in the Greenwood Field Office, effective January 20, 2008.

Jennifer Miller was converted from Student Status to a Career Conditional appointment as a Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-07, in the Greenville Field Office, effective January 6, 2008.

Niles Glasgow was selected as the State Conservationist, GS-0301-15, effective January 6, 2008.

Tibor Horvath was selected as a Conservation Agronomist, GS-0471-12, in the State Office, effective January 6, 2008.

Promotions

George Sullivan was promoted to GIS Specialist, GS-0150-12, in the State Office, effective February 17, 2008.

Lakeisha Hill was promoted to District Conservationist, GS-0457-11, in the York Field Office, effective February 17, 2008.

Michael Sigmon was promoted to District Conservationist, GS-0457-11, in the St. Matthews Field Office, effective March 2, 2008.

Rafael Mendez was promoted to District Conservationist, GS- 0457-11, in the Lexington Field Office, effective February 17, 2008.

Tricia McCalla was promoted to Budget Analyst, GS-0560-09, in the State Office, effective March 2, 2008.

Resignation

Carly Showalter, a Soil Conservationist in the Abbeville Field Office, resigned effective January 19, 2008.

Christina Lucia, a Student in the Walhalla Field Office, resigned effective December 20, 2007.

Darla Simons, a Soil Conservationist in the Edgefield Office, resigned effective December 18, 2007.

Jill Jeffords, a student in the Walhalla Field Office, resigned effective February 16, 2008.

Larry Coburn, a Soil Conservation Technician in the Aiken Field Office, resigned effective December 11, 2007.

Transfers

Shirley Easter, Budget Analyst in the State Office, was promoted and transferred to the United States Attorney's Office, effective January 05, 2008.

Retirement

Curt Hobbs, Agricultural Economist, GS-0110-12, in the State Office, retired effective December 31, 2007.

James Williams, Assistant State Conservationist, GS-0457, in the State Office, retired effective December 31, 2007.

Walter Douglas, State Conservationist, GS-0301-15, in the State Office, retired effective January 2, 2008.