

SOUTH CAROLINA'S NRCS

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Helping People Help the Land



USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Winter 2009

From the Office of the
State Conservationist
Niles Glasgow



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Dear NRCSErs,

After working 42 years and nine months with this agency in places such as Alabama, Colorado, Arizona, Washington, D.C., South Carolina, Florida, and now back again in South Carolina, it is time to retire and bid all of you farewell.

It has been my pleasure and honor to work with many hard working, dedicated SCS/NRCS employees and partner organizations. Working together as a team, we are able to make a difference in our state and in our nation. I am proud of being a part of conservation and protection of our natural resources. NRCS is an agency that makes a positive difference in our environment and in the economic well being of the public that we serve.

I have been a supervisor for 36 years of my career. I believe a supervisor is obligated to help others succeed with the task at hand, and to achieve career goals. I have had the pleasure of being a mentor to many employees over the years. I take great satisfaction in knowing that I have helped others in this organization achieve their career and personal goals.

We have all heard that our people are our greatest asset. I know that is a fact. We can have the greatest tools in the world, but at the end of the day, it is what the employee(s) did that day that makes a difference.

We will all be remembered for something as we move along through life and a career. I hope that I have lived up to what my good friend Bruce Julian said in an e-mail in response to my retirement. He wrote, "You've always been a 'class act' and someone I could count on to step forward for another assignment and always to deliver the goods."

Best wishes to all of you as you make a difference and continue helping people help the land.

Niles Glasgow



Notes from the Field



Bennettsville Small Farmer Succeeds with Roadside Agribusiness

by Amy O. Maxwell, Public Affairs and Outreach

Small farmer Rebecca McArthur has a soft spoken manner and doesn't look like your typical farmer. But, don't let that fool you. This vibrant young woman is driven to succeed, is business-savvy, and most importantly, loves what she does for a living. Despite the fact that she did not grow up on a farm, this nurse-turned-farmer has a true passion for taking care of the land and protecting soil and water quality. She developed her interest and appreciation for agriculture during fifteen years of ag. sales for a private company, and says one of her goals is to help her customers become more aware of the origin of their food. "Society has become dependent and comfortable with what we can buy at the grocery store, and we need to realize that that is not the only option, and that we can be self-sufficient," she explained. McArthur wants more people, both young and old, to understand that locally grown food is readily available, and is a healthy and convenient choice.

Research indicates that the locally-grown movement, and the heightened awareness of where our food is produced, is on the increase. The SC Department of Agriculture reports that consumers are demanding, and in some cases willing to pay more, for fresher, healthier foods. Research also shows locally-grown produce is considered the freshest. In fact, nearly 90% of shoppers in South

Carolina said they would purchase South Carolina grown produce if it was competitively priced and was of good quality. There is also a sense of pride in purchasing products that are from the Palmetto State, and knowing that the money spent is supporting the local economy.

With these facts in mind, McArthur designed, constructed, and marketed her roadside store and agri-tourism business on Highway 38 between Bennettsville and Blenheim. To ensure a productive, sustainable, and conservation-minded operation, she consulted with her local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservationists to develop a whole-farm conservation plan. The resulting plan is enabling her to control erosion, enhance water quality and improve irrigation efficiency. She is also soil testing and maintaining farm records.

McArthur is thankful for the financial and technical assistance she was eligible for through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which offers incentives for small-scale farmers.

A locally-grown product herself, McArthur was born and raised in the same community in which she now farms. She specializes in strawberry production and offers unique seasonal agri-

tourism activities. The "Get Lost-Maize Quest" offers two corn mazes, a pick-your-own pumpkin patch, hayrides, straw bale maze, cider sampling, and homemade breads and ice cream. The on-farm experience is offered to families, Boy/Girl Scout troops, youth groups, corporate groups, birthday party groups, and anyone who is lucky enough to spot her store along Highway 38.

Her *Certified South Carolina* roadside store is a beautifully constructed open-air market which boasts a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as flowers, honey, and jellies and jams made from excess produce. *Certified*



Rebecca McArthur operates a roadside store and agri-tourism business on Highway 38 between Bennettsville and Blenheim.



South Carolina is a cooperative effort among producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture to brand and promote South Carolina products, with the goal that consumers can easily identify, find and buy home-grown products. Agribusiness is one of the largest economic clusters and major economic engines in the state, and has a \$34 billion impact on the economy.

In addition to being a business minded farmer, McArthur has illustrated her conservation ethic by working with NRCS to enhance the environment and reduce environmental impact. Her EQIP plan includes establishment of native field borders to promote quail and song bird habitat, irrigation conversion, grass plantings to combat erosion, and pesticide application, soil sampling and nutrient application in compliance with Clemson Extension Service. Working with District Conservationist Frank Stephens, Soil Conservationist Daniel Griffin, and Soil Conservation Technician Danny Driggers, McArthur's EQIP contract extends through 2011, and will allow

her to gradually implement conservation practices to improve efficiency and enhance soil and water quality. She is also working with alternative energy sources by utilizing biofuels to operate her farm equipment. Stephens, Griffin, and Driggers agree that McArthur is succeeding with her agribusiness because her heart is in the right place. "Rebecca understands the economics of farming, but more importantly she has a good understanding of what her customers expect and want, and she has used this knowledge to create an experience that makes folks want to stop along this highway and see what is available," explained Stephens.

McArthur views her business as more than just a shopping experience for consumers. "I think the biggest challenge is educating the public on the timing of seasonal vegetables and fruits (i.e., local tomatoes in January are *not* realistic). My goal is to maximize the growing

season with alternative farming methods like greenhouse production and tunnel growth." She says one challenge has been getting consumers to change their views on how produce should look when it is offered fresh from the field. "It's not going to be waxed or shined like it is in the grocery store, and folks are still getting used to that." That's where McArthur jumps in to help them understand and appreciate the fact that the products they are buying are farm-fresh, wholesome, and more desirable. "Today's consumers want local produce, but they also want grocery-store perfection." She believes as the buying public becomes accustomed to judging produce for what's on the inside, and the way in which it's produced, as opposed to placing so much value on outer appearance, that consumers will wholeheartedly embrace and support local farmers.

"Today's consumers want local produce, but they also want grocery-store perfection."
-SC small farmer Rebecca McArthur

"Owning my own business has been very challenging, but the rewards are great, and because I love people, and I love the land, it was a great career choice, as well as a lifestyle choice." This small

scale farmer is doing her part to protect and improve the environment, and help the public appreciate and support local agriculture, but says, "I don't really consider myself a success story, but I do believe in doing my best and trying to make this work." This modest, hard-working, steward of the land embraced her passion and is committed to improving the natural resources that sustain her way of life. And with her outgoing personality and contagious smile, Rebecca McArthur is destined to be a success. Visit McArthur Farms at 1708 Highway 38, in Bennettsville.



Horry County NRCS Protects and Improves Crabtree Watershed

A major storm event in Horry County in 1965 resulted in ten-inches of rain within a 24-hour time period, and led to the clearing of the Crabtree Watershed.

Aided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who helped fund the project, the area was improved in an effort to alleviate flood risks and ultimately safe property and lives. Also during that time, a watershed conservation district was organized to monitor the watershed and assess damages and need for repairs after storm events. There are currently five watershed commissioners who assist in the maintenance and health of the watershed.

The area drains over sixty-percent of the city of Conway (which has been impacted by widespread urbanization over the past several decades). Construction from this urbanization, coupled with several major rain events, contributes to excessive erosion and sediment deposition from storm water runoff. Water quality throughout the watershed is impaired by this process. The increase in urbanization is changing the characteristics of the watershed and causing streams to overflow their banks during storm events which poses flooding risks to homes and businesses.



With the help of all the stakeholders in the area, a Watershed Restoration Initiative was established. The group hopes to accomplish restoration by laying back stream bank slopes and adding shelves along the banks which are seeded and can catch pollutants and sediments before they enter the water. These vegetated banks will also benefit wildlife and allow for increased water capacity during heavy rain events. Another benefit is the ability of plant life to help keep water pollutant free. The addition of several catch basins will also help to minimize erosion and gather sediment and runoff in a centralized location.

Crabtree Watershed Restoration Initiative partners include USDA-NRCS, the City of Conway, Horry County, Crabtree Watershed Board, Horry

SWCD, SCDNR, Coastal Carolina University, Clemson University, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Lowcountry RC&D Supports Conservation Education Workshop for Sumter County Educators

A grant from the Lowcountry Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council helped make a two-week Sumter County Teacher's Environmental Workshop at Pocalla Springs Elementary this summer a success. This was the fourth year of the workshop which is a partnership between the Sumter SWCD and two Sumter school districts.

At the Sumter County Environmental Workshops, third- through fifth-grade instructors who teach math and science took part. As a result, students are scoring higher on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test in science than other schools within their district. Students learned about rocks and minerals, soil types, storm water runoff, air, weather, and also enjoyed field trips to Botany Bay in the Lowcountry and Edisto Interpretive Center.

The Lowcountry RC&D Youth Environmental Education Grant Program was created to encourage and enhance natural resources education for South Carolina's young adults, and offers grants to programs that promote, enhance, or assist with environmental education programs for youth.

For more information, visit www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/lowcountry_rcd.html, or call Coordinator Steve Edwards at (843) 549-5596 or email steve.edwards@sc.usda.gov.



MLRA Soil Survey Leader Charlie Ogg discusses different soil horizons of a soil sample collected from the Pocalla Springs Elementary School Wetlands Reserve Program site.



Ninety Six District RC&D Constructs Trail to Link State Parks with Help from Earth Team Volunteers

by Elyse Benson, RC&D Coordinator

After 12 years in the planning stage, the Ninety Six District RC&D took the first steps on the ground toward making the Savannah Valley Railroad Trail in McCormick County a reality. Two work days were held in late October and twenty-three hard-working Earth Team volunteers arrived with hand tools, chain saws, ATV's, a tractor and a bush hog, and cleared nearly three miles of trail. The community has also been supportive of the effort, and this was evident in the enthusiasm of the volunteers.

The trail will eventually reach from McCormick to Calhoun Falls and will connect three state parks, totaling a distance of about 27 miles. There are several historic sites along this part of the SC Heritage Corridor including the Huguenot Cross, Badwell Cemetery, Bordeaux Church and the Mill Creek trestle. The trail also passes through the historic town of Willington, which is fully restored and features a History Center with many fine and rare exhibits, a great bookstore, a Black History Center, a gazebo with garden, and an excellent Thai restaurant.

Frank Clayton, Ninety Six District RC&D Council Member (and the driving force behind the effort) said, "I never dreamed we would get this much done in just two work days!" Through a chance meeting at the Thai restaurant, RC&D Coordinator Elyse Benson met the Operations Coordinator for a Marine exercise to be held in McCormick in January. The Marines were looking for a community service project in the area, and trail clearing is a perfect fit! For more information, contact Benson at 864-229-2174, extension 109.



The Ninety Six District RC&D is working to construct part of the Savannah Valley Railroad Trail in McCormick County, and hosted work days this Fall during which Earth Team volunteers helped blaze the trail.

SC NRCS State Leadership Team Gathers for Planning Summit in Georgetown County

The SC NRCS State Leadership Team (SLT) traveled to Georgetown County, SC, November 16-18, 2009, to discuss plans for the coming fiscal year and set goals and priorities. The meeting would also be the last such Summit for retiring SLT members Frank Wilcox and Niles Glasgow (who are retiring as of January 2, 2010), and for Craig Ellis who transferred to Tennessee NRCS.

Georgetown NRCS District Conservationist Debbie Mann organized an outstanding conservation tour which highlighted some of the innovative work going on in the county.



The SC NRCS State Leadership Team enjoyed a conservation tour in Georgetown County during the FY 2010 Planning Summit.

Don't Delay! Register Today!

January 2010 conferences are right around the corner.

Visit

www.dnr.sc.gov/conservation/conference to access registration and hotel info.

January 19th

SC Soil & Water Conservation Society Symposium, *Farming Naturally*,

&

January 20-21st

2010 South Carolina Conservation Partnership Conference

See you there!



Indian Creek Partnership Hosts Native Warm Season Grass Identification Session

by Sabrenna Bryant, Public Affairs Specialist

The Indian Creek Partnership sponsored a training session on the identification of Native Warm Season grasses on Thursday, October 8, 2009. Participants toured both private and public lands, including the property of private landowner Tim Carlisle and lands owned by the US Forest Service off of Cope Road in Newberry County.

The training was led by SC NRCS Wildlife Biologist Sudie Daves-Thomas and Robin Mackie with the USDA Forest Service. Plants identified included Big Bluestem, Indiangrass, Partridge Pea, Lespedeza, Switchgrass and other native plants of this region.

The ability to identify and understand where native grasses are located and how they grow is important to landowners and conservationists alike, as it helps with conservation planning for prescribed burning and planting food plots.

At the conclusion of the tour, participants enjoyed lunch courtesy of the East Piedmont RC&D and the Newberry SWCD. The Indian Creek Partnership consists of USDA-NRCS, Newberry SWCD, USDA Forest Service and the SC Forestry Commission.



Indiangrass, which is the State Grass of South Carolina, is a warm-season perennial that is native to the region and is often planted for grazing cattle.

Foothills RC&D Coordinator Presented with NRCS Outreach Award

Foothills RC&D Coordinator Dave Demarest was presented with the SC NRCS *State Outreach Award* for his efforts to improve the economic, environmental, and social conditions of an inner-city Greenville community by spearheading a locally-led cooperative conservation project.

Demarest was instrumental in pulling together the talents, resources, and ideas of a local church, conservation partners, local governments, and most importantly, the residents of the neighborhood affected. State Conservationist Niles Glasgow said, "From securing grants and funding sources, to serving as a critical liaison between the many project sponsors, partners, and volunteers who worked to get the project completed, Dave understood, appreciated, and worked hard to address the challenges and opportunities of this community revitalization effort."

The project area is located within a neighborhood along the outskirts of Greenville. Long known as a center of crime and drug activity, the Sullivan Street community was also ironically the home to Long Branch Baptist Church—a well respected and influential institution in the community. The church is guided by Pastor Sean Dogan, another critical component to the success of this project. Demarest and Dogan worked very closely in an effort to ensure that local residents were intimately involved in the planning and implementation of the project. "The response has been overwhelming with scores of private citizens volunteering to help plant trees, clean up trash, and keep the area pristine," reports Demarest. As a result, drug activity and crime have been reduced in this city block, and a previous eyesore is now a quiet, revitalized oasis.

Demarest emphasized the cooperation, enthusiasm, and dedication of the local community leaders and residents. "I could not believe the turnout at our volunteer tree planting day, and it really proved to me that the local folks here are determined to reclaim their neighborhood and make it a safe and friendly place to live."

Demarest was surprised with the presentation of the Outreach Award during the August 2009 NRCS Cultural Awareness Day. He was even more



surprised to learn that sitting out in the audience that day was his friend and conservation partner, Pastor Dogan. The two have developed not only an effective working relationship, but also a long-lasting friendship.

The project is not over yet, and Demarest says there are plans to further enhance the area with features like a native rock sitting area. There is also talk of installing outdoor learning stations where students at a nearby alternative school for at-risk kids could benefit from hands-on encounters with the natural world. The Senior Action Program has also expressed an interest in being involved in an effort to ensure that both young and old benefit from the green way. "Students and seniors will be engaged in outdoor learning activities to help them understand the importance of soil and water conservation, and teach them about responsible stewardship," explained Demarest.

Partners of this cooperative conservation project and community revitalization effort include Foothills RC&D, USDA-NRCS, Greenville SWCD, Long Branch Baptist Church, and the SC Forestry Commission, who provided an Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Grant.



Dave Demarest (left) was surprised with the SC NRCS Outreach Award during the August Cultural Awareness Day. State Conservationist Nilis Glasgow presented the award.



The onset of the new fiscal year found the Bishopville Soil Survey crew (Charlie Ogg, Jackie Reed and Caleb Gulley) and a few others (Ron Morton and George Sullivan) installing water table wells and piezometers.

These devices monitor the depth and flow of groundwater, teaching us things about how water moves through soil that before could only be assumed. The wells, which will be left in place for a minimum of three years, were placed in coastal plain soils with drainage classes ranging from well to poor. As data is retrieved from the wells it will provide better insight on the effects water has on soil properties, and quite possibly, open the door to new concepts and interpretations.

Each well, or piezometer, consists of a length slotted PVC pipe surrounded by sand, a riser, a bentonite (clay) seal at the base of the riser, and a data logger which is inserted into the well pipe. The loggers will take a reading every six hours and record water table depth and water temperature. Data is retrieved using a laptop, which connects to the data logger via a USB cable. Data loggers, we wish you well.



GIS Specialist George Sullivan gets down and dirty putting a bentonite seal on a water table well.



Natural Trail Named for Exemplary Marion Conservationist

Former Marion District Conservationist Fletcher M. Johnson Sr. was honored for his conservation ethic and service when the Marion SWCD named an environmental trail for him. He served as the Marion District Conservationist from 1970 to 1987, and during that time he helped change, improve, and sustain the landscape of the county. Johnson became a Marion SWCD Commissioner in 1991.

During his career in conservation, he worked on six watershed projects including the famous “Smith Swamp,” which he worked on for over thirty-five years through the Emergency Watershed Program (EWP).

The trail named in his honor includes a handicapped-accessible foot trail, tree identification signs, educational kiosks, work stations, a flower garden, a SC Cabbage Palm, and a water feature. The trail was funded with a grant from Vulcan Materials Company and installed with the help of the City and County of Marion, Vulcan Materials, Pee Dee Electric Cooperative, Pee Dee RC&D, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Drew Farms, Lamb’s Produce, Snowden Nursery, Ready Mix Concrete, Azalea Garden Club, Big Dawg Concrete, Asplundh Tree Company, and NRCS.



The Fletcher M. Johnson, Sr., Environmental Trail was created in honor of Johnson's contributions to conservation.

State Conservationist Presents First Giraffe Award to Dillon County's Steve Anderson

On August 27, 2009, at the NRCS Cultural Awareness Day, State Conservationist Niles Glasgow revealed the first recipient of the new **State Conservationist Giraffe Award**. Soil Conservation Technician Steve Anderson of the Dillon County Field Office was presented with the honor, after being nominated by two fellow employees.

Anderson is a twenty-six year Federal employee, with five years of military service and the rest with USDA-NRCS. While attending Florence-Darlington Technical School, a professor told him about the agency, and he applied for a position. “A year later, I was asked to come into the Florence office and retired NRCSer Byron Thompson interviewed me, and hired me on to work in the Clarendon Field Office,” said Anderson. “The longer I worked for the agency, the more I realized that this is what I wanted to make as my life’s work.”

Anderson likes many aspects of his job, including working one-on-one with private landowners, putting conservation on the ground, and riding Jenny the mule. “Jenny is our Kawasaki mule, and when we first got her, we didn’t have a stable, but State Soil Scientist Pam Thomas hooked us up with a blanket, and that’s how we keep her under wraps,” he explained.

During his career, Anderson has witnessed a good bit of change—some good, some not so good. “When I first started with the agency, we spent most of our time in the field, and I knew the customers and their farms and fields like they were my own.” He says he spends much more time now in front of the computer, which takes away from the time he can spend with the farmers. But, he spends as much time as he can out in the field, helping people help the land, and adds, “Any time I can be out in the field, providing direct assistance to landowners, then that is a good day.”

Anderson says he would definitely recommend NRCS as a great place to work for someone that was looking for a rewarding career opportunity. “I like the fact that we can watch our ideas and plans go from a plan on a piece of paper, and then get implemented to a plan that is helping to protect soil and water quality on the land.” His supervisor, Dillon District Conservationist Roger Cooper, sub-



mitted one of the nominations, and wrote, "Steve's product knowledge, communication skills, and ability to effectively communicate with our customers, gives this office an advantage as we service customers efficiently with conservation implementation that produces a conservation return for the tax dollar beyond normal expectations." Cooper also said that Anderson is especially skilled in Farm Bill Program details and is often called on by other offices for assistance and advice.

Congratulations to Anderson for his recognition as the first recipient of this award.



Dillon County Soil Conservation Technician Steve Anderson (left) received the first Giraffe Award from State Conservationist Niles Glasgow.

SC NRCS Employee Spotlight
Tria Yang, Saluda Field Office, Soil Conservationist

by Elyse Benson, Ninety-Six RC&D Coordinator

Tria comes from part of the Hmong migratory agrarian population of Laos which consist of 18 clans including Cha (Chang), Chue, Cheng, Fang, Hang, Her, Khang, Kong, Kue, Lee, Lor, Moua, Pha, Thao, Vang, Vue, Xiong (Song), and Yang. The clans are identified by different colors and patterns, and each has its own dialect. The women are easily identified by their custom clothing colors, displayed on their sleeves, and the way in which they dress.

This culture celebrates only one holiday each year during which time everyone dresses up in their formal attire for the New Year. During this celebration, courtship between young men and women takes place through displays of singing as a ball is tossed between flirting couples. "There are three kinds of weddings in this culture:—love, arranged, and kidnapping," says Tria, with a smile.

The major religion for the Hmong is Shamanism, and the shaman provides spiritual guid-

ance, consultation, and protection from evil spirits and fear. They believe the body is inhabited by thirty-two souls. Things go awry if one or more soul wanders off or an evil spirit lures a soul away, and the shaman may perform a spirit ritual to return the soul. Tools include a bench which represents a horse, a rattle serving as a lasso, and a gong and finger bells to ward off evil spirits. The shaman will also predict the outcome using a split buffalo horn. If both sides land up or down, the outcome will be favorable, but, if one is up and the other down, an animal sacrifice may be used to bargain for the wayward spirit. Shamans are called through a dream from an ancestor and must apprentice with a master. Often, many of the younger generation are now too far away to follow the practices closely, like so many other cultures.

Tria speaks of his family's exodus from Laos when he was a young child. When American troops left Laos, the local supporters were unprotected and in great danger. His family fled to a refugee camp on the Mekong River in Thailand. The screening process to immigrate to the United States was arduous, but in 1980, with the help of an uncle in California to sponsor them, Tria's family arrived in America.

He discussed the challenges of entering school and not being able to communicate due to his limited English, but, says that he met a young lady who assisted him. He continued his education at Fresno State and graduated from North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina. He has a desire to continue his education by earning a Master's in ag. education.

He and his wife and four children live in Saluda where he is a soil conservationist. He has assisted the agency already

by translating conservation related literature into Hmong. He thanks his mentor, Rhode Island State Conservationist Pooh Vongkhamdy, for helping him pursue a career with NRCS, and South Carolina is very pleased to call him an employee.

SC NRCS Saluda
 Soil Conservationist
 Tria Yang comes from
 part of the Hmong
 migratory agrarian
 population of Laos.



St. Helena Small Farmer Honored for Stewardship at Penn Center Ceremony

Includes info. from an article printed in The Beaufort Gazette, by David Lauderdale, on October 1, 2009

Ben Johnson's life has come full circle. He farms family land on St. Helena Island that he left as a young man — kicking the sand off his shoes and vowing to never again drink milk, much less tend cows.

On October 1, 2009, that same man was honored by a roomful of dignitaries and agriculture officials for being named *South Carolina's Small Farmer of the Year* by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and *Minority Landowner* magazine.

During the ceremony at the Penn Center, Johnson was cited as an example of how NRCS helps small farmers sustain a way of life. State Conservationist Niles Glasgow said Johnson illustrates what it means to help people help the land in South Carolina. Reverend Horace Williams Jr. of Faith Memorial Baptist Church also celebrated Johnson as a community leader.

The man of the hour did indeed leave the Lowcountry for a career in New York City. But he found happiness after returning to his roots and working the land.

That can be healthy for the Lowcountry, said Penn Center executive director Walter R. Mack. Before tourism, the Lowcountry was filled with the small, sustainable, subsistence farms that the state and federal agencies are anxious to help rekindle. The agencies offer expertise and standards. And Farm Bill programs can offer eligible landowners financial and technical assistance to protect and improve soil and water quality.

"I really believe, especially on St. Helena Island, which is almost the only green space left in this county, that 'agri-business' can be an important part of economic development," said Mack.

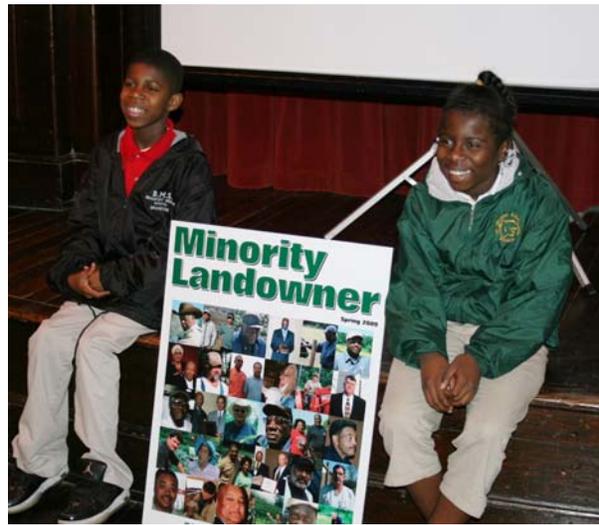


Mr. Johnson (center) and his wife, son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren at the awards ceremony at the Penn Center.

Mack also sees an explosion in the demand for locally grown food. Twenty years ago, there was one local farmers market; now there are seven, he said.

Johnson's family, including his two grandchildren, were in attendance to help honor his stewardship, and his recognition as an outstanding small farmer. Johnson is proud of the fact that his grandkids enjoy and look forward to spending time with him on the farm. They too, are proud of their granddad.

Minority Landowner Magazine Publisher Victor Harris presented Johnson with a poster of the magazine cover featuring his photo.



*Mr. Johnson's grandchildren are proud of their grandpa who was presented with this enlarged cover of *Minority Landowner Magazine* featuring his success story.*

Wild Quail Management Seminar March 11-12, 2010

Bobwhite quail populations in South Carolina and the Southeast have been declining steadily over the past 60 years due to major land use change and reduction in suitable habitat. The 23rd Annual Wild Quail Management Seminar, sponsored by SCDNR, is designed to instruct landowners and land managers in the proper techniques of creating habitat that will support native populations of bobwhite quail.

This year there will be only one expanded seminar which will accommodate 35 participants on March 11-12, 2010, at the Webb Wildlife Center in Hampton County. The registration fee is \$80 and includes meals, overnight accommo-



dations and seminar materials (seminar depends on registration of 20 participants by February 12, 2010, otherwise cancellation will be necessary). The seminar is designed to improve quail habitat management skills and the information is presented so that anyone with an interest can implement the practices on their property regardless of size.

Field demonstrations and classroom instruction will focus on habitat practices including firebreak establishment, prescribed burning, forest management, brush control, discing for natural foods and supplemental food patch plantings. Presentations will be given on wild quail natural history, biology, diseases and parasites, predation and other factors that may be contributing to the population decline. An update on current research will also be presented. Speakers will include wildlife and forestry professionals from state and federal agencies.

Over 1,200 people have attended the seminar since its inception in 1987. These sportsmen and sportswomen have positively affected thousands of acres across South Carolina by applying basic techniques to improve habitat on their lands.

For more information, write Quail Management Seminars, DNR, PO Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202, or call the DNR Small Game Project in Columbia at (803) 734-4306, or e-mail barnesj@dnr.sc.gov.

DNR and Bass Federation of South Carolina Team Up for Youth Fishing Clubs

SCDNR and the Bass Federation of SC have teamed up to bring Youth Fishing Clubs to schools in the state. The South Carolina High School League can make bass fishing a high school sport *if* 16 or more SC schools are involved and if there is a desire for a state championship.

Teams must have a minimum of six youth (within 11-18 years of age) to have an official Bass Federation Youth Team. Membership dues are \$30/per year for each student. An adult advisor is required to help lead the team, provide advice and help arrange tourna-



ments, fundraisers, speakers and other learning opportunities.

To learn more, please contact Lorianne Riggin at (803) 737-8483 or email at RigginL@dnr.sc.gov, or Dan DuPre at (803) 609-1072 or email at DuPreD@dnr.sc.gov.

2010 SC Envirothon Planning Underway

Are you a high school teacher? Do you want to meet science, language arts or social studies standards? Do you try to incorporate outdoor studies into your curriculum? Do you take your students into nature to learn about plants, water quality or wildlife? Do you think more could be done to educate your students about the environment? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you and a team of your students may be perfect candidates for the 2010 SC Envirothon!

The Envirothon is a hands-on environmental competition for students in grades 9-12 across the state. Teachers train their team members in the areas of forestry, wildlife, soils, aquatics, and a current environmental issue. The current topic for 2010 is "Protection of Groundwater through Urban, Agricultural and Environmental Planning." Students will also develop an oral presentation to be presented before a panel of judges during the competition.

You don't have to be an expert in any of these areas to compete. You also don't need to commit and pay the registration fee of \$100 until *after* attending a coach training day. On February 6, 2010, the station managers for each area of the SC Envirothon will be available to provide you with all you need to know for the competition to place in May. This training is free of charge, but please contact Joy Sullivan, Envirothon Coordinator, at sullivanj@dnr.sc.gov prior to the training, or contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

Many of SC's SWCD's sponsor local Envirothon teams, and are a great source of information when looking for resource materials. Visit www.dnr.sc.gov/education/Envirothon for more information about all of the scholarships and opportunities available.



Recruiting for the Future of NRCS

NRCS District Conservationist Attends SC State University Career Fair

On October 17, 2009, Orangeburg District Conservationist Odessa Armstrong attended the South Carolina State University (SCSU) Fall Career Fair.

At this event, Armstrong shared information on careers with NRCS with several hundred students attending the fair. She explained to them the application process, the agency mission and objectives, and told them why she likes working for NRCS. She received fifteen resumes from interested applicants, and shared them with SC NRCS Human Resources staff for review as possible career interns.

"I enjoyed speaking with the students and telling them why I like working for NRCS, and encouraging them to consider conservation work as a career choice," she said.

NRCS employs Accountants, Agricultural Economists, Aquatic Biologists, Biologists, Cartographers, Civil Engineers, Communications Professionals, Contract Specialists, Foresters Engineering Technicians, Geologists, Hydrologists, Information Technology Specialists, Landscape Architects, Plant Specialists, Rangeland Management Specialists, Sociologists, Soil Conservationists, Soil Scientists, Watershed Management Specialists, Wetland Scientists, and Wildlife Biologists.

Check out this website for current NRCS job postings...

www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/HRMD/VacAnnSummaries.html



Future Soil Scientist? *It's never too early to start recruiting. Carley Melton, daughter of State Technology Coordinator Kellee Melton, knows her soil types!*



Bethel DuRant

Celebrating 34 Years of Service

January 8, 2010

Beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Saluda Shoals Park

5605 Bush River Road, Columbia, SC

RSVP to

beverly.alexander@sc.usda.gov

by December 21, 2009

or call (803) 253-3977

for more information.

Niles Glasgow

Celebrating 42 Years and 9 months of Service

January 29, 2010

Meet and Greet begins at 5:30

followed by dinner at 6:00

Damon's Grill, 900 Senate Street, Columbia, SC

More information will follow shortly,

including RSVP details and

request for gift contributions.

Your contact is amy.maxwell@sc.usda.gov.

We hope you can join us for these farewell celebrations!





Conservation Photo Contest Winners



Backyard Creatures, Lateia Sandifer, Administrative Assistant, Bamberg County



Predator and Prey, Ann Bentley, Soil Conservation Technician, Charleston County



No Shoulders, Amanda Roberts, District Manager, Lancaster County



Petrified Wood, Jackie Reed, Soil Scientist, Coastal Plains and Sandhills MLRA Office, Bishopville



Conservation Photo Contest Winners continued...



By the Seaside, Frank Stephens, Supervisory District Conservationist, Marlboro County



Feathered Friend, Hannah Savereno, daughter of Pee Dee RC&D Coordinator Lynette Savereno



Ole' Blue Eyes, Emory Holsonback, Resource Soil Scientist, Laurens County



Flower Bed, LaKeisha Barber, District Conservationist, York County



Wonders of Nature, Sue Griggs, Soil Conservation Technician, Chesterfield County



Personnel News in SC

New Employees

- ◆ John Mikell was selected as a Career Intern Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-07, in the Georgetown Field Office, effective September 13, 2009.
- ◆ Kim C. Johnson was selected as Human Resource Manager, GS-0201-12, in the State Office, effective October 12, 2009.
- ◆ Rebecca Wilson was selected as a Program Assistant, GS-0303-05, in the State Office, effective July 19, 2009.

Promotions

- ◆ Antron Williams was selected and promoted to District Conservationist, GS-0457-11, in the Marion Field Office, effective August 16, 2009.
- ◆ Ben Padget was converted to a career conditional appointment and promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, in the Allendale Field Office, effective August 2, 2009.
- ◆ Brandon Durant was converted to a career conditional appointment and promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, in the Anderson Field Office, effective August 2, 2009.
- ◆ Caleb Gulley was selected and promoted to Senior MLRA Soil Scientist, GS-0470-11, in the Greenwood Field Office, effective August 30, 2009.
- ◆ Jayson Mas was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, in the Lancaster Field Office, effective November 8, 2009.
- ◆ Matt Barrington was selected and promoted to District Conservationist, GS-0457-11, in the Spartanburg Field Office, effective July 5, 2009.
- ◆ Jonathan Todd was promoted to Civil Engineer, GS-0810-11, in the Florence Field Office, effective August 2, 2009.
- ◆ Rebecca Wilson was promoted to Program Assistant, GS-0303-06, in the State Office, effective November 8, 2009.

Reassignment

- ◆ Craig Ellis, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs in the State Office, transferred to Tennessee effective November 22, 2009.

Resignation

- ◆ Bradley Horn, Soil Conservationist in the Laurens Field Office, resigned effective August 1, 2009.
- ◆ Teresa Babb, Program Analyst in the Bennettsville Field Office, resigned effective July 16, 2009.

Retirement

- ◆ Dory Reeves, Human Resource Manager, GS-0201-12 in the State Office, retired effective July 31, 2009.

Meet Daniel Cabaniss

Soil Conservationist, Greenwood, SC

Daniel Cabaniss is a Soil Conservationist in the Greenwood County Field Office, and also serves as the American Indian/Alaska Native Special Emphasis Program Manager on the SC NRCS Civil Rights Committee.

He attended Utah State University in Cache Valley, Utah, from 2005-2008, where he earned a degree in Wildlife Sciences with a minor in Biology. He also received a degree in Accounting.

He was born in Rock Hill and raised in Chester, County South Carolina, with two brothers and eight sisters. Cabaniss and his wife Heather have three sons and one daughter, and are members

of the Catawba Indian Nation in York County, where he spent summers as a teenager working in the tribe's summer youth work programs. This experience helped him learn various skills ranging from wood working to basket weaving, and instilled in him an appreciation for the culture and heritage of the Catawba people.

Prior to working for NRCS, he served a two year mission for his church. He then worked with the U.S. Army at several bases as part of an Environmental Management group responsible for monitoring the impacts of military training. These teams were responsible for monitoring vegetative impacts, soil erosion, and water quality, wildlife populations of native and non-native animals, and invasive plant species control, as well as wildfire control with firebreaks.

He has worked with NRCS since 2007 and started as an intern in the York County, SC, field office. He also gained experience in the Chester and Fairfield, SC, offices, and also worked with Utah NRCS as well.



Daniel Cabaniss is a Soil Conservationist in the Greenwood County Field Office.

