

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

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

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From the Office of the
State Conservationist

Walter W. Douglas



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Greetings! I recently returned from the 57th Annual National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Meeting in Orlando, Florida. This was an exciting convergence of the conservation partnership and as you can guess, there was plenty of talk about Farm Bill 2002 and dollars for conservation. NRCS Chief Bruce Knight told us that the future looks bright for conservation on private lands and emphasized the positive aspects of the technical service provider program. Specifically, he announced the issuance of a web-based registry for technical experts and customers—called the Technical Service Provider Registry or TechReg. This tool will be available nationwide March 1st and will allow interested individuals and organizations to apply and request certification on the Internet.

Chief Knight ended on a positive note stating, “We have helped apply resource management systems on more than 22 million acres and reduced the risk of drought and flooding on 13 million acres in fiscal year 2002.” Think about the positive impact that NRCS has had on the private lands of America, and remember that the South Carolina Conservation Partnership played a huge part in this effort. You should be proud. I know I am.



Wetlands Reserve Program Enhances Wildlife Habitat in Ellore, SC

By Sabrenna Bennett, public affairs intern

“One man’s trash, is a wood duck’s treasure,” is a twist on a popular phrase—one that may be well deserved when describing Burden “William” Bookhart of Ellore, SC. After discovering that 17 acres of his cropland was too low and moist to grow crops, Bookhart enrolled his acreage into the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), with the assistance of former NRCS District Conservationist Bethel DuRant and current District Conservationist Frank Stephens of Orangeburg County. By installing a dike on his land, Bookhart created a natural wetland habitat for waterfowl and other wetland wildlife.

The 1,800-acre Bookhart Farms produces corn, soybean, wheat, oats, and cotton, and has been in the family for several generations. Historically, the 17 acres Bookhart enrolled into WRP was always low and wet. It was drained, however, in the 1950’s and 60’s, with hopes of using it for cropland. But, as the years passed, crops continued to fail, and in 1999 the Bookhart’s decided to convert the land back to its original state. “I’ve always been interested in wildlife and wetlands, and I wanted to see my land enrolled in a program that would benefit wildlife,” stated Bookhart.

To convert the acreage back to a wetland, a 3-foot dike (an earthen structure stacked on top of the ground) was installed around the wetland to hold the water. A 5-foot deep ditch surrounding the dike prevents runoff from the wetland entering nearby cropland or fields.

Previously, drought and hot summers prevented water and moisture from staying in the wetland, but, water has now settled in the area. This newly created habitat attracts many species of wildlife and waterfowl, including great blue herrings, a

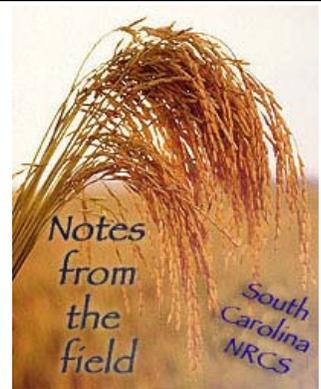
woodstork, bald eagles, wood ducks, blue and green wing teals, snow geese and bull frogs. These animals feed on native grass and bull grass found in the wetland, as well as aquatic invertebrates that develop in the water.

“WRP is a conservation effort to restore the wetlands ecosystem,” explained Stephens. “Through William’s strong conservation effort, he has succeeded in providing a natural wetland habitat.”

In the future, Bookhart hopes the wetland continues to supply a food source for wintering birds in search of a home. “I’m currently looking for more low, wet acreage to enroll in WRP,” stated Bookhart.

“The program helps create a natural environment for waterfowl and wildlife and I hope to see more farmers get involved.”

For more information, contact the Orangeburg NRCS office at (803) 534-2409.



William Bookhart of Ellore, SC, enrolled 17 acres of non-productive cropland into the Wetlands Reserve Program.

Wheels to Work Program Presents Set of Wheels to SC Resident

Edisto-Savannah Resource Conservation and Development's Wheels to Work demonstration project presented a vehicle on January 16th, 2003, at Honda Cars of Aiken. During a press conference highlighting the new program (which is being tested in the six county Edisto-Savannah RC&D area which includes Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Bamberg, Calhoun, and Orangeburg Counties), Ms. Chellete Perkins drove off in her Saturn vehicle. Wheels to Work will provide 100 previously owned vehicles at zero interest loans to participants of South Carolina Department of Social Service's (DSS) Family Independence Program. Wheels to Work is a first of its kind in the state. A successful demonstration project in this area increases the potential for a statewide program.

Wheels to Work makes automobiles available and affordable for eligible participants through low, no-interest monthly payments, with no money down. The program is heavily self-sustained, since all client loan payments are used to purchase additional vehicles. "Wheels to Work offers more than just transportation to Family Independence Program clients—it gives them freedom and in many cases a new beginning as they gain a reliable means of transportation," stated USDA-NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas. "This program will give participants an initiative for higher achievement and self-improvement".

For more information, please contact Wheels to Work Program Manager Stacy Jamison at (888) 866-8852, ext. 1714, or scwheels2work@aol.com.



left to right: Chellete Perkins, Wheels to Work vehicle recipient, Walter W. Douglas, NRCS state conservationist, Peter Zeck, Edisto-Savannah RC&D coordinator, and Stacy Jamison, Wheels to Work program manager.

Protect Your Lake Property the Natural Way! New Brochure Highlights Bioengineering Techniques

The Foothills RC&D, USDA-NRCS, Clemson University, and Anderson, Pickens, and Oconee Soil Water and Conservation Districts produced a color brochure that highlights bioengineering as a way to prevent costly shoreline erosion. The brochure explains that shoreline erosion interrupts the intricate balance between animals and plants, but that bioengineering can return shoreline back to a natural state. For copies of the brochure via email as a PDF, contact Amy Maxwell at amy.maxwell@sc.usda.gov, or 803-765-5402.



The Future of Brushy Creek Watershed

by Dave Demarest, Foothills RC&D Coordinator

The Anderson SWCD, Brushy Creek Watershed District and the Foothills RC&D Council are evaluating a floodwater retarding structure in Anderson County to see if the amount of sediment in the pool area is excessive. "There have been a lot of floodwater retarding structures built under Public Law (PL) 566 in South Carolina in the past 40 years," said Anderson NRCS District Conservationist Mike Banks. "But, chances are, no one has checked to see if the amount of sediment is exceeding the estimated amounts used to design the structures."

The 27-acre structure has been in service for about 42 years and was designed for a life of 50 years. Steve Crowe, chairman of the Brushy Creek Watershed, said, "In order for the Watershed Board to make effective decisions, we need to evaluate the structure now and use this data in our management plan." Crowe is a successful businessman, and as chairman of the Brushy Creek Watershed, he manages it like a business, looking into the future and taking a proactive approach to management. "You will not be profitable or be in business long if you are reactive as opposed to proactive."

The structure has five major tributaries feeding into the reservoir that comprise a watershed of 3,602 acres. The upper end of the reservoir appears to be filled in with sediment. A survey was made of the pool area to calculate the present capacity. This survey data will reveal how much capacity the reservoir has lost.

"We are hopeful that the information collected on this reservoir can be used to formulate a proactive management plan for the future," said Banks. In the future, this

business approach to developing management plans could become a prototype for other PL566 structures.



(left to right) NRCS and DNR employees Kim Kroeger, Mike Banks, Robbie Holcombe, Dave Demarest, Tammy Wactor, and Emily Pohlman completed a sediment survey in Anderson County.

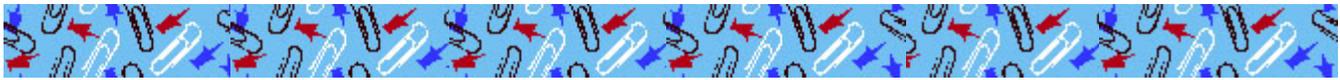
Partners for Trout Receives Wildlife Conservation Award

South Carolina's Partners for Trout was honored at the 38th Annual Conservation Awards Banquet of the SC Wildlife Federation on January 25th. Partners for Trout received the Wildlife Award for their efforts in conserving, enhancing, and restoring cold-water trout habitat along the Eastatoee River in the uppermost northwest corner of the state. Partners for Trout was initiated in 1998 through the efforts of a broad alliance of agencies, trout fishermen, and landowners. A team of agencies led by the Foothills Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) executed the project. Other agencies that have been particularly active include the SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), Trout Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Oconee, Pickens, and Greenville Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's).

Partners for Trout was cited for their dedication, hard work, and knowledge which has led to substantial improvements in SC's trout fishery.



left to right: Gene Dobbins, recently retired NRCS agricultural engineer, Wes Cooler, Foothills RC&D Council Chairman, and Dave Demarest, Foothills RC&D Coordinator, accepted the Wildlife Conservation Award from the SC Wildlife Federation on January 25th.



Organize Your Office!!

Written by: Cynthia L. Kirk and adapted for this publication by Sabrenna Bennett, public affairs intern

Do you need a bulldozer to find your desk?

When the field manuals are flying over the aerial maps and the job sheets are hiding under technical guides, its time to get organized.



Feeling Frustrated??

It is estimated that agricultural employees waste the equivalent of five weeks a year looking for lost items. Let us save those weeks. Do you have "fear of filing?" "Fearful filers" need make no more excuses.

Stand at the edge of your office and examine your domain. Step toward you desk. If you are stepping over mountains of papers, you are just in time!

Block out the stacks of paper, the stale food containers, and any dust, mold or furry moving objects. Just look at the desk.

Now, make your way to the chair and

sit down. I will pause here for those of you who have to remove a pile of debris from your chair before you can sit down.

Ready? OK we are going to attack one area at a time. If you are having trouble finding a place to put things, we are going to carve out some

small space to begin.

Feel free to use a shovel or forklift at this point. Try to select one stack to work on. Finding

something that resembles one stack may be a problem at this point if the entire room looks like one huge mass. If deciphering the actual "boundaries" of a stack on the desk is problematic, you need to take a group of papers and "herd" them into one small stack.

As you are going through the stacks, you may be filled with feelings of failure. "I didn't do this.... I didn't do that... I forgot to pay that... I paid this too late....I should have sent them that." Each time you recognize you did not get something done properly, you feel bad. What you will have when we are done is a way to always feel good about your work. No more mental whiplash.

You may also find that there are stacks of information that are only needed once a year or even less, and these may be worthy of the "box treatment." If you have a spot to store a box of information, then you may see that some of your stacks could live in a box.

Now, look around and see that all the piles are in the right place for easy access and usefulness. You should not see any piles except the one you are working on this very moment. Some people like to put things in binders instead of filing cabinets, which is a grand idea.

When you get yourself organized, pat yourself on the back, have a cup of tea and enjoy country living.

It is estimated that agricultural employees waste the equivalent of five weeks a year looking for lost items!



Don't let your work pile up!

we are going to carve out some small space to begin. Feel free to use a shovel or forklift at this point.

Try to select one stack to work on. Finding



Get Organized!

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



Conservation Partnership News



Oconee SWCD, SCDNR and USDA-NRCS Cooperate on Tater Hill Forestry-Wildlife Project

A visit to the Tater Hill demonstration project on SC Highway 11 northwest of Salem in Oconee County is like walking into a virtual forestry and wildlife management textbook where words, the good earth, greenery and critters meet you at arm's length, all to say something is working here.

Signs stating "linear wildlife strips," "shrub-tree planting," "wildlife opening," and other management practices appear as captions under real-life illustrations on the 275-acre Tater Hill project as a visitor travels the main trail. Examining the growth and blooms on young crabapples and rabbiteye blueberries, you can see the benefits of this permanent orchard. The results of clearing parallel strips along woodland access roads become evident, as you eye-witness how it allows more sunlight to reach the road bed, thereby providing for wildlife and keeping the road drier.

Tater Hill Forest and Wildlife Enhancement Demonstration Area was initiated in December 1995 as an ongoing project to show the compatibility of wildlife and forestry management. The project area—which is part of the state Wildlife Management Area public hunting lands—is open to the general public for self-guided tours. Educational signs are posted along the project's access road. Tater Hill demonstrates how it is possible to both harvest timber and initiate practices that can benefit wildlife. Wildlife openings are mowed, disked or burned to continuously provide nesting, brood-rearing and feeding sites. These openings were integrated with forest management techniques, such as clear-cutting, selection cutting, prescribed burning and reforestation, to create an environment that complements both wildlife and forestry.

The project cooperators include the S.C. Department of Natural Resources; Duke Electric Transmission; Duke Power Pumped Storage; Crescent Resources; USDA-Natural Resources Conser-

vation Service (NRCS); Oconee County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD); Oconee County Forest Landowners Association; S.C. Chapter of the National Wildlife Turkey Federation; S.C. Forestry Commission; and the USDA Forest Service.

2003 SCACD Legislative Banquet

Wednesday, March 5, 2003
Seawells
Columbia, South Carolina

An evening of appreciation
for members of South Carolina's
legislative assembly and their
efforts and dedication to
the conservation of
our state's natural resources.

*For more information, contact
SCACD Executive Director
Linda Tansill at (803) 253-3314.*

PERSONNEL NEWS

Promotions and Reassignments

Matthew Anderson-Promotion, 0457-07, Soil Conservationist, Edgefield, effective January 12, 2003.

You are cordially invited

*July 14-16, 2003
Hyatt Regency
Greenville, SC*

