

# Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Report 2009-2010



## A Message from the Chair

Greetings from the Conservation District!

This is the District's 2009-10 Annual Report. There are other periodic communications with you, our Affiliate Members, friends, associates, and elected officials.

The District is a unique organization established during the 1930's as a local vehicle to identify and correct problems affecting our natural resources. The District brings together federal, state, local government and the private sector in a working partnership.

Not through our efforts alone, but cooperatively, Lexington County was the first county in the state to enact a comprehensive Sediment Control Ordinance (1973). The county continues to lead the state in protecting air quality (smoke management), riparian (streamside) buffers, vegetation and open space.

We are justifiably proud of our community and most everything about it - the environment, our schools, and our general lifestyle. Our success is due to the dedication of our citizens; your commitment and resources.

Thank you,

*Rhett Bickley*

## District Board Meetings

The Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District Board meets at 4:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month except December at the USDA Service Center conference room, 123 Park Road, Lexington. The public is cordially invited to attend. For information call 359-3165, ext. 3.

## Objective One

### Conservation Education

**Teach the basic concepts of wise use of our natural resources through education and outreach programs, targeting students, private citizens, and units of government, in partnership with organizations involved in land development, land management, or land protection.**

### Commissioner Kathy Hensley

Joy Sullivan provided classroom presentations to local schools in the county covering such topics as watersheds, point and non-point source pollution, soils, and wildlife. Joy and Alivia participated in the Wood Magic Forest Fair at Harbison State Forest, served as Science Fair judges at Pelion Elementary School, and presented a water safety program at Gilbert-Summit Library. Through these programs, over 600 students were reached.

*Joy presenting a soils program to students at a local elementary school.*



An Elementary School teacher contacted Bill Melven and requested his help to secure crawfish specimens for three classes of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to study. Presentations were made to 60 students about the biology and habits of crawfish.

On Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Lexington County Community Development and Lexington Soil and Water



*Laurie Reid, SC Forestry Commission, speaking to the workshop participants about Integrated Pest Management.*

Conservation District hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Tree Care Workshop. The workshop was held at the Lexington County Fire Training Facility located at 436 Ballpark Road in Lexington from 9 am until 2 pm, with snacks and lunch provided. (over→)

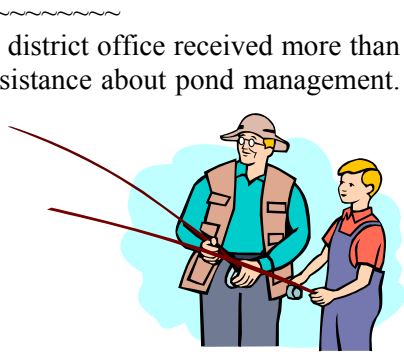
There were 35 individuals that attended the workshop. Most of those in attendance came from Lexington, Irmo, Chapin, and Columbia, while there were some that traveled from as far as Myrtle Beach and Hartsville to attend the workshop.



The workshop covered topics such as Identification and Evaluation of Hazardous Trees, Landscaping and Water Quality, Integrated Pest Management, Structural Pruning of Young Trees, New Species and Design Elements, Legal Aspects of Preserving Trees, and Landscape and Open Space Ordinances. The workshop is designed for local officials and employees who implement landscape ordinances, who are responsible for vegetation management and/or administer landscape regulations, and those in the “green” industry.

At the conclusion of the workshop, International Society of Arboriculture and Society of American Foresters continuing education credits were awarded to those who have either certification.

During the past year the district office received more than 70 calls for technical assistance about pond management. Therefore, the need arose for the district to sponsor a Fish Pond Management Clinic that was attended by over 40 pond owners. Jack Whetstone, Clemson Aquaculturist, covered pond management from the beginning to the end. Bill Blackston, Clemson Extension, talked about having vegetative buffers around the pond edges. Colt Bowles, US Corps of Engineers, presented information about wetlands and when permits were needed. Tommy Stone, Conservation Technician, told the group about pond construction and tax credits.



The 14<sup>th</sup> annual SC Envirothon was held on May 7<sup>th</sup> at the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development. Despite the warm temperatures, nearly 240 students, coaches, staff and volunteers descended upon the institute to face a day of rigorous academic and hands-on testing.



Students were tested on Aquatics, Forestry, Oral Presentation, the Protection of Groundwater through Urban, Agricultural and Environmental Planning, Soils, and Wildlife.

The oral presentation that the students must prepare before the competition demands a working knowledge of every station, and an ability to analyze the information,

coordinate with their team a course of action, and illustrate a plan for implementation. The teams had to present a comprehensive water management plan for a large SC county considering drought, population increases, ground and surface water protection, urban and agricultural needs, and storm water management. Hardly what most students eagerly do on a Friday afternoon!

The staff and volunteers that participated left the competition knowing that they had had a small impact on the future of this state. The Envirothon prepares these students for issues that are now, and will continue to challenge our leaders. All 23 teams from across the state left with a sense of accomplishment, knowing that they gave it their best shot and that they now have a better grasp of the environmental issues. Some of the teams also walked away with college scholarships and station awards!

The Station Winners (those scoring the highest at that station) of the competition were: **Aquatics**, **Forestry**, and **Oral Presentation** – Spartanburg Team A (Spartanburg County), **Groundwater Protection** – Spartanburg Team B (Spartanburg County), **Soils** – Faith Christian School (Berkeley County), and **Wildlife** – Spartanburg Day School (Spartanburg County).

The overall competition winners, whose high scores landed them in the top four were: **Honorable Mention** – Team Greenville (Greenville County), **Third Place**, each member receiving a \$125 scholarship – Spartanburg Day School (Spartanburg County), **Second Place**, with each member receiving a \$250 scholarship – Spartanburg High School Team B, and **First Place**, each member receiving a \$500 scholarship – Spartanburg High School Team A (Spartanburg County). Spartanburg Team A will also move on to compete at the Canon Envirothon competition that will host approximately 45 other US and Canadian Province teams in Fresno, CA from August 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>.

The scholarships and prizes at the state level were provided by the generous donations of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of the state, their State Association, the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the Low Country RC&D Council, the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund, the SC Association of Future Farmers of America, the Canon Envirothon Committee, and various personal donations made by the ‘*Friends of Envirothon*’.

The Envirothon receives thousands of hours of in-kind services from its committee members, volunteers, station managers, graders, on-call EMT staff, photographers... and so on. The event is a true model of partnership for a common cause: providing a challenging, but fun outdoor experience for high school students that will encourage them to be stewards of the land, not just with their hearts, but with their heads and with their hands. Invest in your

future and become a sponsor of the SC Envirothon Program. To learn more, please visit our website at [www.dnr.sc.gov/education/Envirothon](http://www.dnr.sc.gov/education/Envirothon).

Lexington County had three teams to participate in this year's Envirothon. The district sponsored two teams from Chapin High School and one from Batesburg-Leesville High School. The teams from Chapin High School finished 7th (Team 12) and 12th (Team 2), with Batesburg-Leesville's team finishing 9th. The district is proud of these teams for doing an excellent job in representing our county. Congratulations on your placements!!



*Batesburg-Leesville's Envirothon Team*

The Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District proudly announces the recipients of the 2010 scholarships. The district offered two scholarships this year, but three were awarded due to financial need and the quality of applicants. The scholarships were in the amounts of \$1,000 and \$500. The scholarships were available to senior high school students in Lexington County interested in pursuing careers in the conservation field.

Jacob Brown, a senior who attends Lexington High School, is the recipient of the \$1,000 scholarship. He has served as Treasurer of the Lexington Technology Center FFA Chapter and has participated on the Floriculture, Tractor Driving, and Wildlife Management Career Development Event (CDE) Teams. He is a member of the National Technical Honors Society and is an Umpire for the Lexington Dixie Baseball. Jacob has learned the importance of soil and water by enjoying the outdoors through playing sports and hunting. He realizes that demands on our natural resources are becoming greater by the day and that our society needs these resources in order to live. He has learned that we must protect and conserve our flora and fauna on this earth. As a result of his love for the outdoors and the need to protect our natural resources, Jacob has decided to major in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology by attending the Bridge to Clemson University at Tri-County Technical College in the Fall. His proud parents are Rob and Jana Brown of Lexington.

Katie Davis, a senior who attends Batesburg-Leesville High School, is the recipient of one of the \$500 scholarships. She has served as Secretary of the Beta Club and Vice-President of the Art Honor Society. She is a member of the FFA, Spanish Honor Society, Yearbook Staff,

Science Club, and Women's Varsity Tennis. She is a member of the family band, which is called the Tom Branch Band. Katie has grown up in a rural farm environment, where she realizes the importance of our natural resources. She stated in her scholarship application that, "As a society, we must find a way to protect our environmental systems while giving people the quality of life they desire". She believes these resources need to be well managed for their preservation. Katie will be attending the Bridge to Clemson University at Tri-County Technical College in the Fall, where she plans to major in Food Science and Nutrition. Her proud parents are Jeffrey and Ruth Davis of Batesburg-Leesville.

Brooke Whitaker, a senior who attends Pelion High School, is the recipient of the second \$500 scholarship. She has served as Secretary, Vice-President, and President of the Pelion FFA Chapter and has participated in the Soils and Wildlife Management Career Development Event (CDE) Teams. She is a member of the Student Council, Prom Committee, and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). Brooke has grown up in the country, where she has gained a great appreciation for the outdoors. Through her involvement in the FFA, she has developed a better understanding and a greater appreciation for our environment, especially for agriculture and wildlife. Brooke will be attending Midlands Technical College in the Fall and plans to transfer to Clemson University to major in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology. Her proud parents are Jimmie and Christi Whitaker of Lexington.

Scholarships were presented to Jacob, Katie, and Brooke by Brent Weaver, Associate Commissioner, of the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District during the District's Annual Awards Banquet that was held on Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at T&S Farms. The Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank each of the students who applied for the scholarships this year. The District congratulates all graduating seniors and wishes them the best as they prepare for their future!

*Pictured from Left to Right: Jacob Brown, Brooke Whitaker, Katie Davis, and Brent Weaver, Associate Commissioner of the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District.*



The Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District recently held the judging and awards presentation for their Annual Youth Photography Contest. This year's

contest marked the eighth year the contest was held. There are two divisions in which students compete; Division I is for students in Grades 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> and Division II is for students in Grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. The categories in which students enter photos are Trees and Plants, Landscapes, Wildlife, and Rural Life. Photos were judged on composition, originality, and effectiveness of conveying the theme of the category. This year's judge was Ms. Tamera Talbert of Tamera Talbert Photography in Gilbert, SC.

This year's winners in **Division I** are as follows. Regan Burroughs of Lexington, won first place in the **Trees and Plants** category with her "Beautiful Handful", followed by Anderson Breeland of Lexington, receiving second place with his "Pushing Daffodils", and Alice Steven of Lexington, receiving honorable mention with her "Wild Winding Vines" photo. Rebekah Muckenfuss of Lexington, won first place in the **Landscapes** category with her "Pier Tenacity", followed by Alex Albrecht of Lexington, receiving second place with his "Winter Wonderland", and Taylor Wright of Lexington, receiving honorable mention with her "Waterfall" photo. Kara Kleckley of Lexington, won first place in the **Wildlife** category with her "Flying Solo", followed by Joseph Mader of Batesburg-Leesville, receiving second place with his "Luna", and Nicholas Rypkema of Lexington, receiving honorable mention for his "Arrival of Spring" photo. Alice Stevens of Lexington, won first place in the **Rural Life** category with her "Old Barn Door", followed by Taylor Wright of Lexington, receiving second place with her "Old Mill Barn", and Joseph Mader of Batesburg-Leesville, receiving honorable mention with his "Metro" photo.



*Pictured left to right: Alice Stevens, Reagan Burroughs, Kara Kleckley; Larry Nates, Lexington SWCD Commissioner and Awards Presenter; Joseph Mader, and Anderson Breeland. Not pictured are Rebekah Muckenfuss, Alex Albrecht, Taylor Wright, and Nicholas Rypkema.*

Winners for **Division II** are as follows. Ally Taylor of Gilbert, won first place in the **Trees and Plants** category with her "Blueberry Bee", followed by Matthew Drafts of Gilbert, receiving second place with his "Loblolly Pine New Growth", and Douglas Dooley, Jr. of Pelion, receiving honorable mention with his "Dogwood Blossom" photo. Matthew Drafts of Gilbert, won first place in the **Landscapes** category with his "Boat on Our Pond" photo, followed by Drew Moore of Cayce, receiving second place with his "God is Good", and Jenna Kleckley of Lex-

ington, receiving honorable mention for her "Pale Sky" photo. Matthew Drafts, won first place in the **Wildlife** category with his "Luna Moth's Eyespot", followed by Jenna Kleckley, receiving second place with her "Heart of the Woods", and Hunter Moore of Cayce, receiving honorable mention for his "Take a Gander" photo. Brothers, Hunter Moore and Drew Moore of Cayce, each received



*Pictured left to right are Matthew Drafts, Kara Kleckley, Drew Moore, and Hunter Moore. Larry Nates, Lexington SWCD Commissioner and Awards Presenter, is in the back, behind Kara and Drew. Not pictured are Ally Taylor and Douglas Dooley, Jr.*

honorable mention in the **Rural Life** category with their photos "Tree My Dog" and "Billy Goat Gruff".

Each first place winner received a \$50 cash award, each second place winner received a \$25 cash award, and each honorable mention winner received a magazine subscription to the *S.C. Wildlife Magazine*, as well as a certificate. Winners received their awards at the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Banquet that was held on Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at T&S Farms. The winning photos were displayed at the annual banquet using a PowerPoint presentation, and will be displayed on the district's website at [www.lexswcd.org](http://www.lexswcd.org). Awards are made possible by our wonderful affiliate members' donations.

The Lexington SWCD presented a Conservation Education Award to Mrs. Glenda Swearingen-Foy at the Annual Banquet in May for her Ecology Workshop and Fishing Tournament called "Critters in the Creek". Mrs. Foy's workshop is open to youth in 1st through 12th grades and teaches them about the different animals found in a creek and their importance to the ecosystem. The youth are able to explore the creek and participate in a fishing tournament at the conclusion of the workshop. The "Critters in the Creek" Workshop is held in April of each year at Saluda Shoals Park.



*Mrs. Glenda Foy and Fred Taylor*

## Objective Two

### Conservation in Urban and Developing Communities

**Help developers and property owners plan and design onsite stormwater infiltration practices to better control erosion, slow runoff, protect and improve water quality, and protect lives and property downstream.**

**Commissioner Fred Taylor**

Over 60 calls were received for technical assistance to help solve excess runoff water problems around and under houses. Site visits were made to assess the situation and recommend possible solutions. Some situations took several visits to get sediment movement under control.



*Jim Kinard, Lexington County Council Chair, making a Rain Barrel*

The conservation district assisted the Lexington County Stormwater Division and Clemson Extension with two Rain Barrel Workshops where approximately 50 individuals came to learn how to make a Rain Barrel and the benefits of having one to harvest rain water.

On May 13th, 2010 at the Annual Awards Banquet, the district presented the Irmo-Chapin Recreation Commission the Conservation Leadership Award. The award was presented by Commissioner Kathy Hensley to Jay Downs and Bruce Loveless of the Irmo-Chapin Recreation Commission.



*Pictured left to right: Jay Downs, Kathy Hensley, and Bruce Loveless.*

The commission received this award for their vision and leadership in planning and installing a Wetlands Preserve at Saluda Shoals Park in Irmo, SC. The Wetlands Preserve was opened to the public on Thursday, March 25th, 2010. The Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with the East Piedmont RC&D Council donated a Wetlands Sign for the Wetlands Preserve.

The Urban Forestry Award was presented to the Town of Lexington for their leadership and protection of our Urban Forest. The Town of Lexington has been successful in planting and preserving trees in the town limits of Lexington for numerous years. The Town of Lexington has been recognized by the Arbor Day Society for the past 22 years as a Tree City. On behalf of the Town of Lexington, Dan Walker, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Sanitation for the Town of Lexington, accepted the award from Rhett Bickley, Chair of the Lexington SWCD Board.



## Objective Three

### Conservation in Rural Communities

**Plan and put on the ground conservation systems that help agricultural producers and others improve both surface and ground water quality, improve soil health, and develop or protect wildlife habitat.**

**Commissioner Dwight Davis**

The Conservation District and the Hollow Creek Watershed District assisted the Lexington Stormwater Division secure a DHEC grant for funds to help solve some water pollution problems along the creek. DHEC had monitored the stream at various road crossings and found Fecal coliform bacteria at several places. This bacteria can cause a variety of health problems. Technical assistance from USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service will be provided to the farmers in the watershed.

Other district technical assistance was provided to property owners having beaver problems. Beavers cause environmental resource problems as well as economic problems when problems have to be solved.

Many rural ponds are reaching the age when pipe and concrete riser structures problems are starting to show up. Several structures had to be retrofitted this year.

***"If we do not permit the Earth to produce beauty and joy, it will in the end not produce food either."***

***Joseph Woodkrutch***

# 2008 Farm Bill: What's in it for you...



The 2008 Farm Bill offers America's agricultural producers and nonindustrial private forest landowners more assistance than ever before to voluntarily conserve natural resources on our Nation's privately owned farm and ranch lands. Its provisions provide technical and financial assistance to help producers implement conservation practices that reduce erosion, protect our waters, improve fish and wildlife habitat and improve air quality. This list introduces the assistance available to establish practices through voluntary conservation programs.

### **EQIP---Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, NRCS develops contracts with agricultural producers to implement conservation practices to address environmental natural resource problems. Payments are made to producers once conservation practices are completed according to NRCS requirements. For 2011, first cut-off sign up will be September 30, 2010.

### **WHIP---Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program**

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is for conservation-minded landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forestland. If you are interested in developing or improving high quality habitat that supports fish and wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance, WHIP could be the program for you. For 2011, the first cut-off sign up will be September 30, 2010.

### **CSP---Conservation Stewardship Program**

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. CSP supports stewards of the land who want to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and enhancing, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land. Through CSP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will provide financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. For 2<sup>nd</sup> round cut-off, sign up was June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

Conservation Highlights in Lexington County for 2009-2010 are below:

- ◆ Developed EQIP contracts totaling \$140,000 on 400 acres and WHIP contracts totaling \$30,000 on 350 acres.

- ◆ Developed CSP contracts totaling \$230,000 on 1677 cropland/NI forestland acres.
- ◆ Provided Conservation Technical Assistance to more than 60 Lexington residents on erosion problems, pond management, and forest and wildlife recommendations.
- ◆ Assisted a Certified Organic Farmer on 90 acres.
- ◆ Prepared new conservation plans for 2500 acres of cropland, 550 acres of forestland, and 225 acres of pastureland.
- ◆ Certified conservation practices that include: cover crop (400 acres), pasture planting (10 acres), fencing (300 linear feet), prescribe burning (250 acres), and fire-breaks (6600 linear feet)
- ◆ Calculated 2 agricultural water budgets for irrigation and livestock water supply.
- ◆ Developed 3 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans for existing Poultry Operations.

If you would like to receive technical assistance or participate in one of these voluntary programs, do not hesitate to call me at (803) 359-3165 ext.106.

From the desk of your District Conservationist,

Rafael O Mendez



*"Arrival of  
Spring"*

*by Nickolas  
Rypkema*

*Honorable  
Mention*

*Wildlife*



## District Commissioners and Staff

### Commissioners:

Rhett Bickley  
Dwight Davis  
Kathy Hensley  
Larry Nates  
Fred Taylor

### Associate Commissioners

Raymond Caughman  
Hugh Caldwell  
Jim Low  
Brent Weaver

### Chaplain:

Vacant

### District Staff:

Bill Melven, Dist. Manager  
Alivia Gunter, Admin. Asst.

### NRCS Staff:

Rafael Méndez,  
District Conservationist  
Tommy Stone,  
Conservation Technician

### OCIO-ITS Staff:

Randy Taylor, IT Specialist

### DNR-LW&CD Staff:

Joy Sullivan,  
Program Coordinator

**For assistance contact us at:  
(803) 359-3165 ext. 3.**

Web Address:  
<http://www.lexswcd.org>