

Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District News and Views

February 2009

Volume 12 Issue I

Equine Management Workshop

A 6-week (one night a week) equine management workshop is planned for Lexington County and surrounding counties. The Tuesday night workshops will start March 10th and end April 14th. The sessions will start at 6:30 pm



and end around 9 pm with a snack break about mid-way each night. The location for the workshop is in the Lexington Clemson Extension Office (old Kroger Building) located at 605 West Main Street in Lexington.

Several organizations and agencies are sponsoring this workshop including SC Department of Agriculture, Clemson University, Clemson Extension Service, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, East Piedmont Resource Conservation and Development Council and the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District.

This workshop has been planned to expose participants to things they need to know to keep their horse healthy and safe. The planning group has brought in local and statewide authorities to speak on subjects from "A" to "V", agronomy to veterinarian. Participants will find out the many opportunities available to them; from answering questions to riding opportunities available for pleasure.

There is a registration fee of \$60.00 for the six sessions. If you just drop in for a session the cost is \$15. A presentation book with the speaker's handouts and other information will be given to six-week registrants.

If you are interested in attending this informative workshop please call Bill Melven in the Lexington SWCD Office or e-mail him at bill.melven@sc.nacdnet.net for additional information. You can pick up a flyer with registration information at your favorite place where you buy horse supplies. Please come and learn more about what is best for your horses.

YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST UNDERWAY

Attention Youth! The 2009 Youth Photography Contest is officially underway. The categories in which to enter your photos are the same as last year: Trees and Plants, Native Wildlife, Landscapes, and Rural Life. There are two divisions in which you can enter - Division I and Division II. Division I is for students in grades 9-12 and Division II is for students in grades 6-8. The deadline for entries is the close of business day Monday, April 6, 2009.

All photos must be taken in South Carolina between January 1, 2008 and April 6, 2009. The photographer ***must reside*** in Lexington County. Students can enter a total of four (4) photographs in the contest, with a limit of two photos per category. Photos submitted must contain the following information: the photographer's name, address, phone number, grade level, and school; category and title of photograph; subjects in photo, if any; and location of where photo was taken. Each photo submitted may be in black and white or color print and in the sizes of 4"x6" or 5"x7".



Awards will be given to first place, second place, and honorable mention winners in each of the four categories in each Division. First place award winners will receive \$50 each. Second place award winners will receive \$25 each. Honorable Mention award winners will receive a magazine subscription to the *SC Wildlife Magazine*. All award winners will be recognized at the District's Annual Awards Banquet that will be held on Tuesday, May 19th, 2009.

For a complete list of rules, please visit the district's website at www.lexswcd.org or contact Alivia in the district office. We received lots of photos from talented youth last year and look forward to seeing their work again this year. Happy Photographing and Keep up the Great Work!!

All federal, state and local programs and services provided through the Lexington Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Biologically Speaking

by Bill Melven

Our ponds will start to come alive again real soon. Hopefully the rainfalls have helped restore water levels back to normal.



Several pond owners lowered water levels down during the cold winter weeks to

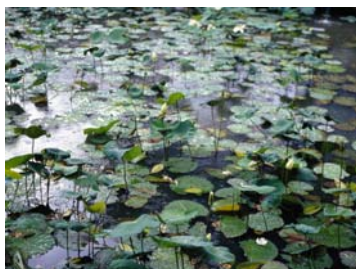
eradicate some problem weeds in the pond. The weather conditions in South Carolina and especially Lexington County just don't get cold enough and last long enough to kill most of our weed problems. So if you had a problem with undesirable weeds you need to observe the pond water and vegetative growth early in the spring as the water starts to warm up. If you still have the problem you have three opportunities to control the plants: one method is "mechanical", removal by hand; the second method is "biological", removal by fish; and the third method is "chemical" removal.

With the mechanical method, there are a few plants where this might give some relief. Alligator Weed and Water Primrose that have formed floating mats can be raked to the edge and then raked out by hand. All this does is to cut down on the density and does not eradicate the plant.

With the biological method, the hybrid grass carp will work on some aquatic plants, but not all. The plant problem should be identified before buying these fish. Another species of fish that works on some plants and algae is called Tilapia. This is a tropical fish that does not overwinter here. They do reproduce well but will not survive our cold winters.

With the chemical method, the plant problem should be identified. One chemical does not generally control all plant problems.

If you have plant problems you should be careful about fertilizing the pond water, as is common practice. The main purpose of fertilizing a pond is to help get the food chain established for fish. Another purpose of fertilizing a pond is to create a water color (the greenish color is called the bloom and helps shade out sunlight that causes rooted aquatics to grow). It is very possible to over fertilize the water and cause other pond problems.



STORMWATER EDUCATION

Storm water management issues last year presented some rather serious problems between property owners. The management of storm water events comes down to individual ethics in many cases. Each property owner should be willing to take care of their own water in such a manner as to not cause a problem for his neighbor. The neighbor should understand that, if he changes the topography on his property, so that now water flows differently, or a quantity now gets to the property line faster than before, then he should try to alter these conditions so that a problem is not created for his neighbors. If someone builds a house and driveway on a wooded lot that all drains downhill, the flow conditions will be changed on the neighbor's property. This is natural.



Sometimes the problems can be worked out together with the parties involved. Hopefully with the new County Ordinance in place some of these issues will be avoided.

Other serious problems involved contractors not installing drainage systems properly. Another problem involved the disposal of woody material by burying it in the ground and surface water runoff started eroding the soil at the burial site, under foundations of living quarters or buildings. We recommend that no building, house or trailer be placed where trees, limbs or other woody material has been buried.

Another precaution involves buying a lot for building a new house. The location of where you plan to build the house should be critically evaluated. Look at the topography of the lot. Look for drainage patterns where water from above flows across the lot. Find out if there is a stream or ditch drainage across or near the lot. Flat areas adjacent to these features might be within a flood plain and cause problems for a new home.

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

Joseph Woodkrutch

Conservation Education

ENVIROTHON COACHES' TRAINING HELD



On Saturday February 7th, fifteen teachers from across the state attended a

training workshop for the 2009 SC Envirothon competition. The training covered aquatics, forestry, wildlife, soils, and 'biodiversity in a changing world'. The training was held at the lake house at the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development. One local teacher from Chapin High School attended.

The state competition will be held on May 1st, and the registration deadline is April 1st. If you are interested in participating in this competition, either call the office or contact Joy Sullivan via email at sullivanj@dnr.sc.gov. The cost of entering a team is \$100, but funding may be available through the Conservation District.

Partnership Job-Shadowing

Over the past few months the office has had a number of requests to provide job-shadowing opportunities. Brandon Corder from White Knoll High School was the first, followed by Brooke Whittaker from Pelion High School, and lastly, a group of three from White Knoll Middle School; Rocio Mendez, Rafael Mendez, Jr., and Karielys Sabat.

These students surveyed and made field visits with the District Conservationist, assisted Bill Melven, District Manager on some of his excursions dealing with pond management and home water problems, and the three middle school students surveyed a pond, took GPS points and learned how to use ArcGIS to create a digital map with Tommy Stone and Joy Sullivan.



Rafael Mendez and
Brandon Corder

Rocio Mendez, Karielys Sabat,
and Rafael Mendez, Jr.

Scholarships Available to High School Seniors

The Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District will award two scholarships this year, one in the sum of \$1,000 and the other in the sum of \$500. Both scholarships are available to eligible high school seniors residing in Lexington County, who will be attending a college or university in the fall. The scholarship recipient must be majoring in an agricultural or environmental related field such as: vocational agriculture education, agriculture engineering, agronomy, biology, forestry, horticulture, natural resources, etc.

These scholarships are made possible through the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Commissioners, businesses, organizations, and individual citizens in the county. Applications are available from your guidance counselor, the district office, or the district's website at www.lexswcd.org. The deadline for the applications is close of business on Monday, April 6th, 2009. For more information, please contact Alivia at (803) 359-3165 x. 3.



Conservation Teacher of the Year Nominations Being Accepted

Do you incorporate environmental science into your lesson plans? Do you have an outdoor classroom? Do you use conservation based curricula? If you are a teacher and answered yes to any of these questions, you may have the qualities of a Conservation Teacher of the Year.

Each year the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District accepts nominations from school teachers in the county, and honors deserving teachers at the annual awards banquet, which will be held on May 19th, 2009. There are two categories for teacher awards: Primary Teachers – K-6th grade, and Secondary Teachers – 7-12th grade. If you have incorporated conservation into your school program and would like a nomination form, please visit our website at www.lexswcd.org or call the conservation district office at 359-3165 ext. 3 to have one mailed to you.

The deadline for all nominations is close of business on Monday, April 6, 2009. Don't miss out on the opportunity to be recognized in your community!

Harvest Your Rainwater

Have you been collecting rainwater in an open barrel to use to water plants? Do you worry about mosquito larvae and small animals falling into the pool? These are common concerns for those that try to conserve the limited rainwater we've been receiving. But worry no more! The rain barrel is here!

Harvest your rainwater by collecting it into these barrels via a system of gutter piping. A simple screen prevents mosquitoes and small animals from entering the barrel, and you'll have 50 gallons of irrigation water at your disposal. You can even set up two barrels with an overflow valve from one to another. You'd be surprised how much water you can collect from just a small rain...even from morning dew!

The conservation district will have these barrels available for purchase at \$90 each. Do your part to conserve our surface and groundwater supply by harvesting your rain!



Commissioners:

Fred Taylor, Chair
Rhett Bickley, Vice-Chair
Kathy Hensley, Treasurer
Dwight Davis
Larry Nates

Associate Commissioners

Raymond Caughman
Walt Douglas
Jim Low
Brent Weaver

Chaplain:

Vacant

District Staff:

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

USDA - NRCS Staff:

Rafael Mendez,
District Conservationist
Tommy Stone,
Conservation Technician

USDA - OCIO - ITS Staff:

Randy Taylor, IT Specialist

DNR-LW&CD Staff:

Joy Sullivan,
Program Coordinator

Phone: (803) 359-3165 x. 3

Website:

<http://www.lexswcd.org>

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.

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