

Soil and Water District Commissioners

Congratulations to our re-elected District Commissioners Kathy Hensley and Fred Taylor. We at the Soil and Water District Conservation Office welcome their continued contributions to our Board and staff.

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.

Commissioners

Fred Taylor, Chair
Brent Weaver, Vice-Chair
Kathy Hensley, Treasurer
Dwight Davis
Larry Nates

Associate Commissioners

Raymond Caughman
Hugh Caldwell
Wayne Grooms

Chaplain

Vacant

District Staff

Bill Melven, District Manager
Christine Blum, Administrative Assistant

USDA - NRCS Staff

Rafael Mendez, District Conservationist
Tommy Stone, Conservation Technician

USDA-OCIC-ITS Staff

Randy Taylor, IT Specialist

DNR-LW&CD Staff

Joy Sullivan,
Program Coordinator

Phone:

(803) 359-3165 ext. 3

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www.lexswcd.org

Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District News and Views

January 2011

Volume 14 Issue I

SOIL AMENDMENTS

Back in the mid-90's the Conservation District, NRCS, Columbia Airport, DHEC and the Savannah River Ecology Lab conducted a Field trial that incorporated coal ash from the McMeakin Power Plant into a badly eroding sandy clay borrow pit at the airport. The results showed definitely that this coal ash application improved the condition of the soil and we got a beautiful stand of vegetation as the result.

Water quality was monitored from deep wells as well as from shallow piezometer wells at each monitored test site. The reported data was not sufficient to get approval to use coal ash in this manner. EPA and DHEC still consider coal ash to be a hazardous waste.

The coal burning electric plants do produce a product that can be used on land applications. The product is called "**Synthetic Gypsum**" and comes from the scrubbing operations at the power plants. SCE&G has two plants where this product is available. Santee Cooper power plants also have the product.

The recent growth of South Carolina's peanut industry, especially the large percentage of Virginia-type peanuts grown, has created a big need for calcium, commonly referred to as land-plaster.

A report that I read says that "Clemson University Peanut Specialist Jay Chapin says gypsum from the Santee-Cooper plants has performed well in tests". You might want to check this out.

GOING GREEN

Residents in Lexington County are apparently getting into "**Going Green**" and protecting water resources and even harvesting rain water from their houses into Rain Barrels. The Lexington Countywide Consortium that involves almost all the Municipalities and the county have held Rain Barrel workshops and Rain Garden design workshops that had excellent participation.

Taking care of pet waste and water from the Car Wash businesses are other objectives being addressed by the Consortium. Bill Blackston, retired Clemson Extension agent is the leader of this group. The Lexington Stormwater Division was the main organizer of this effort because of the Clean Water Act emphasis on pollutants affecting our streams and lakes.



NEW WEB SITES FOR PRESCRIBED FIRES

Sudie Thomas, Wildlife Biologist for NRCS/USDA in the St. Matthews Field Office has found two new web sites that should be of interest to those planning prescribed burns.

Check out these web sites: www.goodfires.org and www.visitmyforest.org. Go to the bottom right corner of this web site and see the slide presentation about the benefits of prescribed fire.

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.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District
News and Views



Lexington Soil & Water Conservation District

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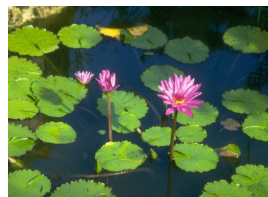
Biologically Speaking

by Bill Melven

The winter months are a good time to start planning what needs to be done when the weather starts to change to warmer temperatures. Our new calendar has some suggested dates to start some of these activities.

PONDS

If pond waters needed to have limestone added, to correct pH readings, this should be accomplished in January or February so the pond mud and water can adjust to this change. Water temperature starts to rise and the pond starts to wake up for the next growing season.



When aquatic plants, whether they are the good ones or the bad ones start to grow and if you detect that some look different this spring than they did last fall, you need to get them identified. If treatment is needed don't wait until late summer to start your control methods.

Excess nutrients from warm blooded animals that are living in the watershed of the pond can cause serious problems that relate to water quality. These nutrients that get into the water from these animals can produce algal blooms that sometimes are toxic and may even produce bad smells and even fish kills if the growth is very dense.

Very few ponds need the addition of inorganic fertilizer like we used to recommend. Some ponds that have very clear water may need help getting started with good algae blooms (the green color).

TREE CARE WORKSHOP

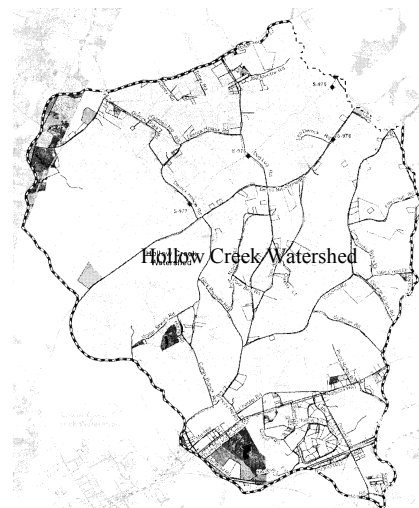
Robbie Derrick, Lexington County Landscape Coordinator, has planned another Tree Care Workshop scheduled for February 18th. Watch for the announcements in the papers or go to our web site: www.lexswcd.org or go to the County's web site: www.lex-co.com for more information.

HOLLOW CREEK WATERSHED

The Hollow Creek Watershed water quality improvement project is moving along. Synithia Williams, Environmental Coordinator for Lexington County, is the contact person if you have questions. She can be reached at 785-8634 or emailed at: swilliams@lex-co.com.

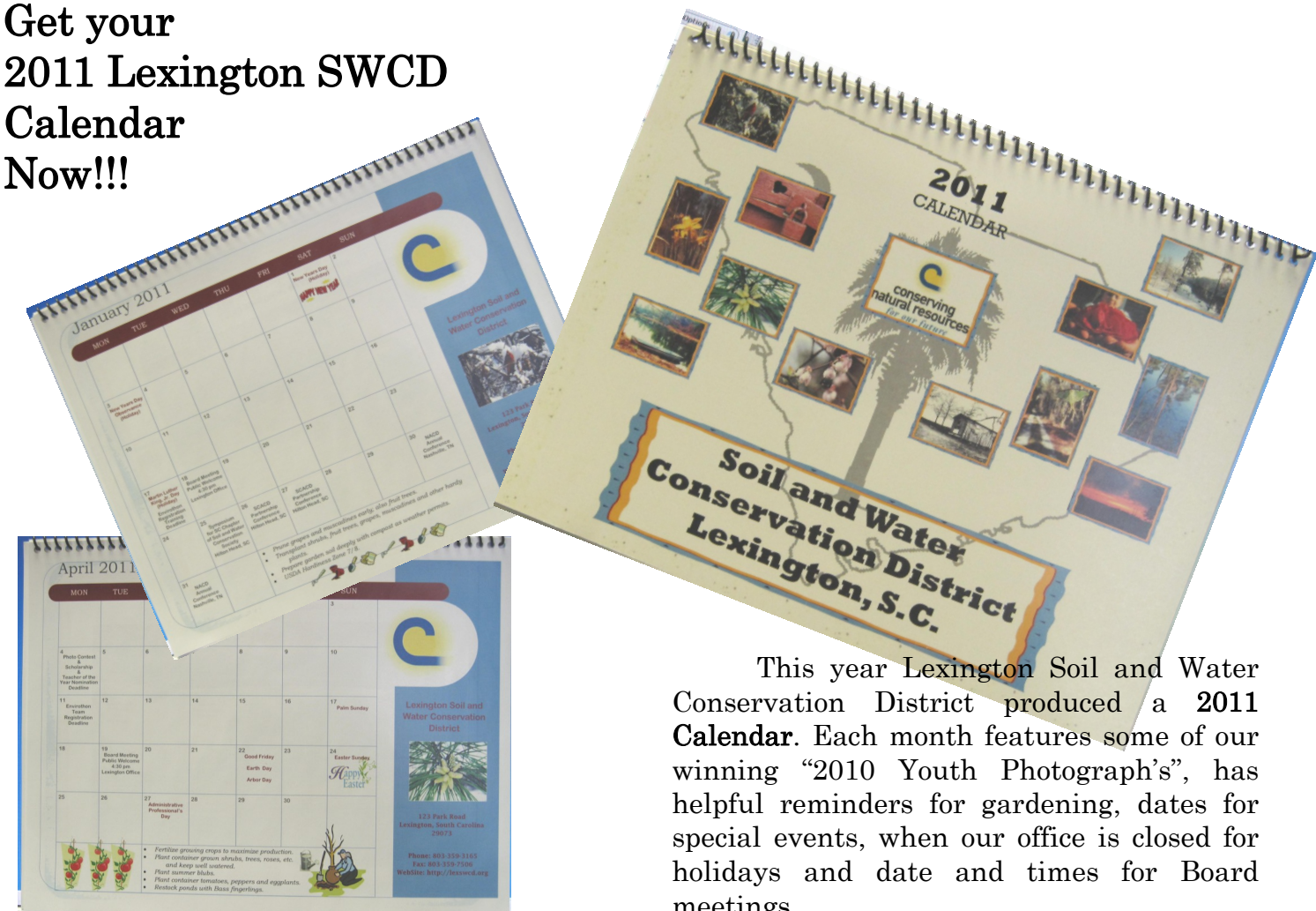
This project requires work with two different groups of landowners. Farmers, the first group, have already met and projects are beginning. The other group sought, will be property owners with septic tanks. Work is under way to meet towards the latter part of January with property owners that have septic tanks that are not functioning properly. Watch for the meeting announcement in the local papers. If you have a septic tank with problems, give Ms. Williams a call for program information.

This water quality improvement project is a joint effort that involves several county, state and federal agencies.



Everyone is involved with water quality. Protection of this natural resource should be of concern to everyone. Water quantity is of concern to the agencies as well. Having enough for our future is important.

Get your
2011 Lexington SWCD
Calendar
Now!!!



This year Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District produced a 2011 Calendar. Each month features some of our winning "2010 Youth Photograph's", has helpful reminders for gardening, dates for special events, when our office is closed for holidays and date and times for Board meetings.

Hurry and orders your today, it's not to late. The cost is \$10 and the proceeds go to Lexington SWCD for conservation education and activities.

Contact Tina at tina.blum@sc.nacdnet.net or come by the Lexington SWCD office at 123 Park Road, Lexington, South Carolina.



Watch the newspaper, local news channels and our website www.lexswcd.org for more details on these contest, the deadline is close of business Monday, April 4, 2011:

- **"Youth Photography"**

Division I is for students in grades 9-12

Division II is for students in grades 6-8



- **"Teacher of the Year"**

Primary Teachers K-6 grades

Secondary Teachers 7-12 grades

- **"Scholarship Awards"**.

High School Seniors majoring in agricultural or environmental fields

If you live in Lexington County and qualify for any of these contest we wish you luck. You can't win if you don't enter. All winners will be invited to our "Annual Recognition Banquet" on Thursday, May 12, 2011.