

# Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District News and Views

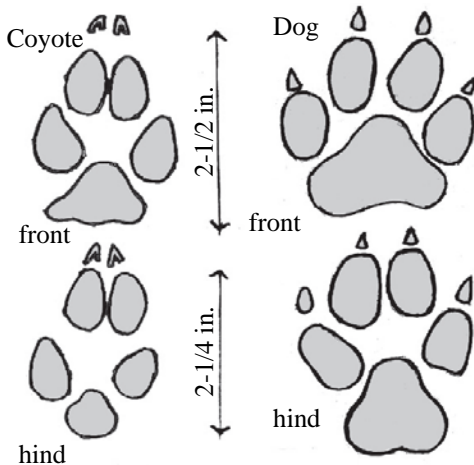
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## Coyote Population On the Rise

The coyote population is growing in Lexington County. Many citizens are concerned and have asked for information on how to identify a coyote.

The coyote has the general appearance of a small shepherd-type dog; standing 23 to 26 inches at the shoulder with a slim muzzle, erect pointed ears and a bushy tail. The fur is generally a grizzled, grayish-brown but varies greatly from a light tan or reddish-tan to almost black. The typical coyote weighs 30 to 45 lbs, though coyotes over 60 lbs. have been recorded in other states.



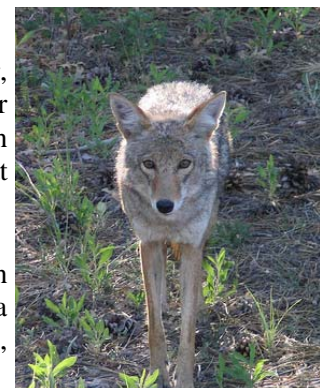
Coyote tracks are similar to other dog tracks; however a coyote's tracks are usually longer than they are wide. Their tracks are usually more compact than dogs', and their stride is longer, about 16-18 inches while trotting. Typical coyote tracks are 2-3 inches long and 1 1/2 to 2 inches wide with the front heel pad being larger than the rear. Often, only the middle two claws will be present in the tracks.

Coyotes are opportunistic feeders. While rabbits comprise the majority of their prey items, they also eat rodents and other small mammals, and supplement their diet with fruits, berries, and insects. They will eat carrion and will also prey, to a limited degree, upon deer fawns and occasionally on adult deer. Coyotes can also prey on domestic poultry and livestock, particularly sheep, goats and calves. Cows giving birth, especially animals having difficult births, can be susceptible to predation as they usually separate from the herd while birthing. On occasion, coyotes will prey on domestic pets. Pet predation is usually due to the territorial nature of the coyote and lack of an alternative prey base in suburban areas.

Coyote scat varies depending on their diet. Often it is cigar shaped and may contain bone, hair, berries and seeds. Coyote scat may also be nearly formless and dark red to black in color after feeding on larger animals. The most likely places to find coyote scat is along dirt roads, on ridges, trails, near large rocks or prominent clumps of vegetation. It is believed that coyote scat is often deposited to mark territories.

Coyotes are typically most active beginning at twilight and continuing throughout the night. In some areas they may be seen during the day, especially when left undisturbed. Coyotes have a keen sense of smell and good eyesight. They can reach speeds of 40 mph for short durations, though they can sustain relatively high rates of travel over several miles.

Resident, or territorial male coyotes, typically have a home range from 2 to 20 square miles, with females occupying smaller ranges. Coyotes may move several miles within their home range daily, and their movement activity usually peaks during breeding season. Coyotes usually hunt alone or in pairs and may travel over fairly large areas in search of food.



*Continued on Page Two ...*

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Coyotes have various calls in addition to howling that include yips and barks. Typically, their vocalizations are used to communicate location or to gather individuals together. Coyote vocalizations usually peak during the breeding season, and vocalizations are generally more frequent during clear nights with moderate temperatures. Often, loud noises from trains, airplanes or sirens will trigger coyote vocalizations.

For additional information on coyotes, please visit the SC DNR webpage at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/coyote/index.html>. The publication, *Coyote Biology and Control in South Carolina*, where much of the above information was taken from, is available to view. For more information about coyotes, control techniques, trapping advice, or anything else coyote-related, contact the DNR Furbearer Project at 803-734-3609.

## Pond Maintenance

*by Fred Taylor*

For pond owners in Lexington County, the time comes when it is necessary to perform pond maintenance. The maintenance activity can be in the form of work performed on the dam, the spillway mechanism, or dredging of the pond basin. In any event, it is imperative that the owner utilizes Best Management Practices (BMP's) so as not to impair down stream water quality.

Many ponds constructed on private lands are at or near the end of their 50-year design life and pose a public safety threat. Many spillway mechanisms were constructed with concrete materials. The deterioration of concrete block and pipe over time can contribute to problems with a pond. Also, sedimentation occurs in the pond basin and lends to the necessity of having to remove this material, i.e., sand and silt. The process of removal usually occurs after the pond has been "drawn down" from the full pool level. It is necessary that the "spoils" from this process **not** be placed into the head of the pond, as this is considered filling of wetlands. The "spoils" should be utilized elsewhere on uplands.



Maintenance activities for private ponds are covered under the United States Army Corps of Engineers nationwide permits. This particular activity falls under permit "number 3 - Maintenance".

If you have any questions or concerns in performing pond maintenance, please notify Mr. Colt Bowles of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers at (803) 253-3400.



## Soil...the Scoop on it!

Soil – it nurtures life and death; under girds cities, forests and oceans; and feeds all terrestrial life on Earth. It is a substance that few people understand and most take for granted. It is arguably one of the Earth's most critical natural resources.

Soil makes up the outer layer of the earth's surface, it nourishes the plants we eat, the animals we use for food and fiber and the thriving underground kingdom of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, earthworms and other microbes that are critical to the planet's food web.

Topsoil is the most productive soil layer and the layer that is the first lost due to soil erosion. Erosion occurs naturally because of wind, water and ice acting on any exposed rock or soil surface. Human activities are responsible for 60-80% of all erosion. A single rainstorm can wash away centuries old accumulations of soil from damaged, neglected or badly managed ground. In many places, soils are eroding faster than they can be rebuilt. Though soil is a renewable resource in theory, soil forms slowly. For all practical purposes, the soil we lose to erosion will never be replaced in our lifetime.

When soil erodes, much of the displaced sediment - as well as pollutants that are mixed with it such as pesticides, oil, grease and excess nutrients wash into streams, rivers and eventually the ocean. This in turn effects water quality and disrupts the health of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Since the Dust Bowl of the 1930's the protection of soil from erosion and degradation has greatly increased through the formation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and many state and federal agencies. These Conservation agencies equipped with their highly skilled conservationist assist landowners and the general public through education and technical assistance as to the importance of the soil and how to properly manage the thing that humans literally owe their very existence.

*Article comes from 2009 NACD Soil Stewardship Material at [www.nacdnet.org](http://www.nacdnet.org).*

# Affiliate Membership Application

You can be instrumental in helping conserve Lexington County's natural resources. You can help a student attend a conservation workshop or receive a scholarship in a natural resource field. You can make a difference in educating the public about conserving the abundance of natural resources in Lexington County — soil, water, plants, animals, and air, and help keep Lexington County a wonderful place to live.

Please help conserve your county's natural resources by becoming an affiliate member of the Lexington Conservation District. Our conservation friends are important to us, and your financial support will help continue the work that we do. For more information on conservation issues and our programs, please contact us at 359-3165, ext. 3 or visit our website at [www.lexswcd.org](http://www.lexswcd.org). We thank those of you who have generously donated in the past and encourage others to become involved.

## Affiliate Membership

Yes, I want to become a sponsor of the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District.  
Please check one:

- Conservator Golden Eagle Membership ----- \$1,000 and above
- Sustaining Osprey Membership ----- \$250 to \$999
- Supporting Silver Fox Membership ----- \$30 to \$249

**How do you want this membership listed?**    Individual or the company name?

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Company Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail form to:**    **Lexington Soil & Water Conservation District**  
                          **123 Park Road**  
                          **Lexington, SC 29072**

# Carolina Coastal Adventure

The district is accepting applications from 9th and 10th grade students to participate in an exciting 3-day environmental workshop that will take place at Santee Cooper's Somerset facility in Pinopolis (Berkeley County) from October 9th-11th, 2009. The goal of this workshop is to provide an integrated hands-on opportunity to learn, as well as to bring each student to the realization that healthy aquatic ecosystems are valuable resources which provide human communities with clean water, food, recreation, and unique cultural traditions.



The Lexington Conservation District will sponsor students on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline for receiving applications is Close of Business on Friday, September 4th, 2009. A deposit of \$50 is required and should accompany the application. The deposit will be returned after the camp, provided the applicant attends. Please make your check payable to the Lexington Conservation District. For more information or an application form, please call the Lexington SWCD Office at (803) 359-3165 ext. 3.

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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.

*inside...  
Equine Management Workshop  
Educational Opportunities  
Stormwater Education  
Harvesting Rainwater*

**Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District  
News and Views**

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