

Lexington Soil & Water Conservation District

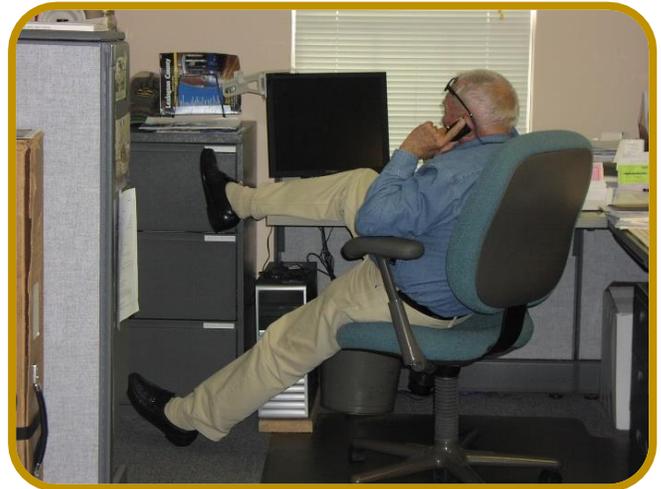
News & Views

DATE: DECEMBER 2022

The Bill Meleven **Conservationist of the Year Award**



Bill Meleven is a great man. If you remember nothing more, remember that he is a great man, and among the very greatest in his field of Wildlife Biology and Conservation.



When I first met Bill, I was straight out of college in my very first 'big-girl' job, and I was a bit nervous starting. When we met, we discovered we both hailed from the Mid-West: he from Illinois and me from Indiana. I've been under his wing since and Lexington SWCD became my home office. I had no idea though that I was signing up for another degree in **The Science of Environmental Conservation...The Crash Course** (I made that up). In the 15+ years we worked together, I earned my honorary degree (in that degree I just made up!).

It's appropriate for Bill to receive these much earned and much deserved accolades near Christmas, because he is a man who finds pure enjoyment in giving. He loved to walk away from a job handing a client an Affiliate Membership form and his card instead of an invoice. He lived for it. Now I live for it. Bill gave so freely of himself that he has left an indelible mark on this state, this county, this country, and the hearts of all who know him.

Bill was always in the office early and he stayed late. He valued education and was a strong supporter of conservation education and education outdoors. He worked tirelessly for Soil and Water district employees and their pay and benefits. He was a District Manager, and he managed well. His expertise in water quality and aquatic weeds made him a very popular resource to anyone in the county with a pond. He sat at his desk in the morning with a cup of coffee, filling up his little district pocket calendar in teeny-tiny print...months in advance. I think he has retired 3 or maybe 4 times now! Gosh, he might still be working....

Bill is what the world needs more of. He has left a legacy of love and learning, and I am so grateful to have been a part of that. Thank you, Bill for your years of service. You have done well, my friend. Now rest!

– Joy Sullivan

You think we need one more? Alright we'll get one more.



Our newest member to the staff started on September 19, 2022.

Hi, I'm Matthew, and I'm the new Education Program Assistant with Lexington Soil and Water Conservation district. I've lived in the midlands area for most of my life, either in Richland, Lexington, or Aiken County. My wife and I live in Batesburg where we have a very small farm (just beginning!). I've been involved in natural resources for most of my life, having previously worked at the NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island in the Outer Banks of NC in the husbandry department, as well as involvement in the local community garden on the island, and managing the NOAA weather station there on site. I'm excited to be back in Lexington County and I look forward to helping others see the many natural gifts of this great county and how best to protect them!

COMMUNITY CORNER

Do you know that Lexington County is the home of one of the world's largest roosts of purple martins? I recently sat down with Zach Steinhauser, a naturalist in charge of environmental education at Wingard Market in Lexington to find out more about these birds.

Purple martins are a kind of swallow that eats insects. They spend their winters in the Amazon and head north in the spring and summer. These birds have found a roosting place on Bomb Island and form the largest roost of martins in N. America. Why Bomb Island? Well, it's in the middle of Lake Murray which protects the birds from predators and there are plenty of insects for them to feed on. 90% of purple martins live east of the Mississippi



The birds were first discovered by a Lexington County citizen in 1988. Since then, curious folks have ventured on the lake at sunset to watch the birds come to roost- thousands of them. They put on quite a show for onlookers. The martins arrive in the spring and are usually gone by late august. Bomb island is owned by Dominion Energy. SCDNR puts up signs to alert people to keep off the island during roosting season.



One way to help the purple martin is to prepare proper nesting areas for them. If you are interested in learning more about the purple martins and how you can help, go to [www.purple partin.org](http://www.purplepartin.org) or contact Zach Steinhauser at zach@wingardsmarket.com.

– Commissioner Padgett

The Neverending Story...of Meetings

A teacher's job is never ending and on September 28, 2022 we hosted an **Agricultural Teachers** meeting, at Mediterranean Café, in the hopes of learning what programs they would like us to bring to the schools. Katherine Porth from FSA joined us and offered her expertise as we broke down the many programs we offer to teachers. We hope to have similar meetings in the future so we can stay informed and help the teachers as best we can.

We also had the East Piedmont Meeting in September, the Mid-Year Meeting in October and in November we sent our Administrative Assistant to Pigeon Forge TN for the Southeast Conservation District Employees Association Conference. All these meetings help us communicate with different conservation districts and gather new and innovate ideas that we can bring back and use to help preserve and enhance the natural resources of Lexington County.

ALL ABOUT THEM TREES



RH Fulmer Middle School
Megan Carrero

Presented with an Arbor Day Tree
for winning the State Middle Level
Principal of the Year award



Pelion Elementary School
Archery Team

Presented with an Arbor Day Tree
for winning the World and National
Competitions

Bradford Pear Bounty Tree Exchange Program

Our commissioners and staff braved the cold morning air to assist Clemson Extension and the SC Forestry Commission with their tree exchange event. There was a steady flow of people for the first two hours with some arriving as early as 7:45am. The Master Gardeners Association manned the check-in table where attendees showed proof of having removed one or more of the dreaded Bradford pear trees. Then Clemson Extension and the SC Forestry Commission helped attendees pick up to five new trees from the sixteen types available. While some members of LSWCD helped prepare the trees for transport, others manned the information table and spoke with attendees. Volunteers from the Boy Scouts, GHS Beta Club, and Gilbert FFA offered their assistance as well. All in all, despite some cold toes, the event was a definite success.



Matthew's **Education Corner**

I've been out and about, meeting with teachers from across the region. At Saxe Gotha Elementary, I showed off our Rainfall Simulator, which demonstrates the importance of soil cover and living roots in helping to protect water resources. We also looked at non-point and point sources of pollution with the Enviroscape model. The Enviroscape model is a great visual aide that not only shows several different pollution sources, but also how they runoff in a rainfall scenario - the kids seemed to really enjoy it! I had a great time exploring traditional farming methods with the kids at Midway Elementary. We looked at different farming methods and crops around the globe.

Also, I'm hoping to help schools create and manage garden beds on site, as several teachers have reached out. I'm looking forward to getting those up and going for next season! I had the wonderful opportunity to help at the annual Wood Magic Forest Fair at Harbison State Forest. It was wonderful to be outside and see the kids having a good time learning about the forest.

Lastly, Mini-grant applications wrapped up and we were honored to offer two grants this year: Kim Lewis at Saxe Gotha Elementary and Angela Kruger at Beechwood Middle School Congrats!

– Matthew Quattlebaum

Affiliate **Drive**

42

A big thank you to everyone who has donated towards the 2023 Affiliate Drive and those who have donated in the past. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

It's Heeerrreee



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



The LSWCD Board meets at 4:30pm on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Lexington County Auxiliary Administration Building.

The public is cordially invited to attend.

Please call (803) 358-8679

Commissioners

Larry Nates, Chair
Jamie Gunter, Vice-Chair
Barbara Padget, Treasurer
Kathy Hensley
Hugh Caldwell

Associate Commissioners

Bill Melvin
Peter Lauzon
Lanneau Siegling
Fred Taylor
Valerie Jackson

Chaplain

Pastor Mike Watson

District Staff

John Oxner, *District Manger*
Nick Walker,
Administrative Assistant
Matthew Quattlebaum,
Education Program Assistant

USDA-NRCS

Robin Amie,
District Conservationist
Taylon Holmes,
Soil Conservationist

SCDNR

Tyler Brown,
Program Manager