

Beaufort Soil & Water Conservation District 2020 Annual Report

Serving Beaufort County for over 75 years

Mission

“To help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment by promoting wise land use practices, environmental education, and technical assistance”

Board of Commissioners:

Alan A. Ulmer, Jr., Chair
Claude McLeod, Vice Chair
Denise Parsick, Sec/Treasurer
Luke Inabinett, Member
Dannie Lesesne, Member
Art Holland, Associate
Carol Murphy, Associate
Howard Heckrotte, Associate

District Staff Members:

Shelby Berry, District Manager
Debby Way, Education Specialist
Cindy Jani, Education Specialist
John O’Connell,
Education Specialist
Phyllis Atkins, Community
Health, Safety, & Trails

COVID-19 Affects Spring & Summer Activities

Several spring festivals were canceled due to the spread of Corona Virus, COVID-19. Events usually attended that were canceled included KidFest, Port Royal’s Soft Shelled Crab Festival, Earth Day Port Royal Farmers Market, Birthday for the Birds, and other Earth Day Festivals.

Some folks did do family litter collections and Commissioner Denise Parsick said “Happy Earth Day” to passerby’s in downtown Port Royal.

Our hardest cancellation to make was the Eco Camp XXXI. We had a great program planned for camp “Back to the Basics” where children would learn about all the natural resources we use in daily life and just take for granted like fibers for clothes, a variety of foods, trees and all the products they provide, and pollinators that help our plants produce. Hopefully we will be able bring this program to our kindergarten through Fifth grade students in July of 2021.



The Conservation Partnership includes:

USDA-NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Service:

Ben Padget, Acting District Conservationist

SC Dep. of Natural Resources, Land Conservation Division:

Tyler Brown, Program Coordinator for Conservation Districts

SCACD—SC Association of
Conservation Districts

NACD— National Association of
Conservation Districts

SCCDEA—SC Conservation District
Employees Association



Beaufort Soil & Water Conservation District

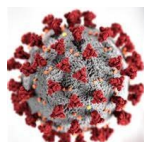
124 Lady’s Island Dr., Beaufort SC 29907

Mailing: PO Box 70, Port Royal, SC 29935

Tel: 843-255-7306 Email: bswcd@islc.net

Website: www.beaufortconservationdistrict.org Presently our COVID Office hours are

Mon-Wed- Fri- 9am—Noon. Continue to check our website, email us, or call us to see if we are back to our regular schedule, Monday—Friday 9am to 2pm.





Natural Resources Conservation Service

On the Ground Conservation Practices in Beaufort County

NRCS and Beaufort Conservation District provided technical support to agricultural landowners in Beaufort County, obligating \$23,407 in EQIP, Environmental Quality Incentives Program. \$14,783 was paid out for Best Management Practices (BMP's) thorough EQIP. Additionally, \$11,473 in technical assistance was provided to Beaufort County. EQIP practices and technical assistance help keep our water clean and make the land more sustainable by:

- Providing habitats attractive to pollinators
- Offering protection for threatened and endangered species
- Fighting invasive species
- Preventing fires and managing underbrush
- Site prep for planting trees and improving timber stands

The following BMP's were installed voluntarily by landowners through EQIP Cost share.

Prescribed Burn



Herbaceous Weed Control of Chinese Tallow or Popcorn Tree



Seasonal High Tunnel



Tree Planting & Timber Stand Improvement



Pollinator Habitat Management



USDA-NRCS Field Office—Ben Padget, Acting District Conservationist
7554 W. Main Street, Room 128 Mailing: PO Box 190 Ridgeland, SC 29936
Phone 843-726-8148 Fax 843-726-5763

USDA-NRCS Accomplishments

Hurricane Dorian Assistance

NRCS Assistance was available in October 2019 for several coastal counties in South Carolina including Beaufort County Farmers for Ag land damaged due to Hurricane Dorian. Hopefully there will not be any damaging hurricanes in future, but please be aware that special assistance could be available again in the future so please stay in touch. If you would like to be added to our Landowners List serve for announcements of this kind, please call or email us your contact information!



**LOWCOUNTRY
LANDOWNER'S
ASSOCIATION**

The Lowcountry Landowner's Association met again in October 2019 in Colleton County. There was a social hour, then dinner and a program. There were speakers from the Center for Heirs Property Preservation and the Forestry Association of South Carolina. This group advocates for agriculture, forestry, wildlife, conservation, and landowner rights. If you are interested in joining this new organization, please contact Janet Steele at 803 -534-6280 or jmwatt@clemson.edu.

LOCAL Work Group

The Local Work Group for Beaufort and Jasper Counties met to discuss the NRCS Priorities for determining funding for the FY20 EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program). Participants included Conservation District Commissioners, SC Foresters, Farming and Wildlife experts, Center for Heirs Property, Clemson Extension, and of course NRCS. NRCS is using a new computer program that can combine a variety of facts, and works with the ArcGIS program. The group prioritized in order: Plants, Animals, Water Quality, Soils and Energy.



USDA-NRCS Landowner Workshop –February 2020

Beaufort NRCS presented another Landowner workshop in February 2020. The workshop was sponsored by NRCS and Minority Landowner Magazine. Victor Harris of Minority Landowner Magazine attended the two day workshop, furnishing lunch and supplies, both days. The first day, information and classes were presented at the St. Helena Library meeting room. The second day, the group went to Barefoot Farms, where they installed a Seasonal High Tunnel. Several presentations were given on the first day and the workshop was well attended. Local farmers and landowners learned about NRCS programs, how to sign up with Farm Services Agency, how to improve Soil Health, Budget Management on Small Farms, and why to make a Will and do Estate Planning. Several landowners learned how to assemble a Seasonal High Tunnel which helps extend the growing season.



Conservation & Education Outreach

Education: Beaufort SWCD presented 122 programs and events reaching 2736 students & adults.

Community: Commissioners & Staff attended 60 partner and advisory meetings with over 500 people. Staff provided technical assistance to 57 citizens. Staff assisted nearly 700 visitors and county staff at Crystal Lake Park. Commissioners and staff attended 9 training workshops and webinars.

Eco Camp XXXI: This year, Eco Camp had to be canceled. We had a great program planned with a focus on the many natural resources we depend on for the basics of life called "Back to the Basics."

Arbor Day at Crystal Lake Park: Michael Murphy, local arborist, donated a Bald Cypress Tree and planted it for us in celebration of Arbor Day. Other Saturday programs included Soil Tunnel, Sea Turtles, Bats & Spiders . See pictures below.

Below, left to right Michael Murphy plants a Cypress Tree at Crystal Lake Park, visitors watch the planting, John O'Connell explains the Soil Tunnel, Dan & Danny Jani work on a craft, & Matthew Jani checks out a night crawler.



Commissioners & Staff Updates

Commissioner Denise Parsick was reelected in the 2020 November General Election.

At the annual SCACD, SC Association of Conservation Districts, meetings, service awards are given especially since the position of a Conservation District Commissioner is a volunteer "job" and a nonpaid position.

Mr. Alan A Ulmer, Jr. was recognized for 40 years of service and Mr. Luke Inabinett was recognized for 20 years of service.

Collectively our Board of Commissioners has over 120 years of experience!

Pam Floyd, Education Coordinator, retired in December 2019. The Board of Commissioners made a donation in her name to the Port Royal Friends of Cypress Wetlands in honor of her retirement.

Other notes: Most of the staff has not been working since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 Corona Virus Pandemic. Our programs include many hands-on activities and we did not want to risk the safety of our employees.



Above: Pam Floyd retired December 31, 2019.



SC Department of Natural Resources

Beaufort SWCD continues its strong partnership with the SC Department of Natural Resources. We work together with statewide activities & education events, SWCD laws & procedures, and staff training. DNR publications, fishing and hunting information and handouts are available at our office. Further information can be viewed at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/>. **SCDNR ACE Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR)** continues to provide support to Beaufort County. The ACE Basin NERR scientists and staff provide education and volunteer opportunities to area students and adults. We really appreciate our local DNR experts! <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/marine/NERR/>

Water Quality & Conservation Partnerships

Together for Beaufort Water Quality Coalition: As a member of the Beaufort County Human Services Alliance, Beaufort SWCD supports *Together for Beaufort* by leading the T4B Water Quality Coalition. Beaufort SWCD continues to strengthen this coalition that consists of agencies and organizations involved in promoting, educating, & enforcing clean water in Beaufort County. We meet with **Lowcountry Stormwater Partners** since there are so many members belonging to both groups. Each meeting has a special presentation on a relevant topic as well as partner updates and upcoming events. Contact us to join.



Green Steps Schools: Despite the COVID-19 shutdown in March 2020, we were able to assist River Ridge Academy in completing their annual paperwork. They do a great job incorporating Green Activities throughout the year in several classes. Check out programs and school websites at <http://greenstepschools.com/>

Left: River Ridge Academy students picking up litter and working in the garden.

Other Education News: This past year Beaufort SWCD received a **Lowcountry RC&D Youth Education Grant** to provide activity booklets to supplement education programs. Major publications are the Soil Tunnel books and the Cypress Wetlands books. Educators also partnered again with the Outside Foundation to present the Enviroscope for **Kids in Kayaks** for Bluffton & Hilton Head Island 7th graders. This two part program is half day in the water and half day on land with environmental programs.

The **H.E. McCracken Memorial Scholarship** was established in honor of the late Emmitt McCracken in 1984 to benefit Clemson University students from Beaufort enrolled in Agriculture, Natural Resources or Biology studies.

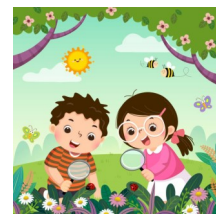
Mail donations to:
Clemson University Foundation
P.O. Box 1889
Clemson, SC 29633
Include Reference # 539,
McCracken Scholarship Fund



**Support an Education program or send a child to Eco Camp,
“Back to the Basics”**

See Form on page 6 to contribute!

Environmental Education helps raise test scores, improves health, gets kids outside, promotes focus & critical thinking, encourages creativity, leadership skills and empowers children to make a difference in the world.



Our Conservation Partnership Services are Available to All Citizens of Beaufort County

Technical Support to land owners, producers and government entities on BMPs through USDA-NRCS.

Educational Support and outreach programs to teachers, students, scouts, churches, camps & civic groups.

Coordinate partnerships with other agencies on variety of projects, programs, and festival outreach events.

Technical support for creation of trails, greenways, blueways, and outdoor learning centers.

Library of historic aerial photography from 1955, soil surveys, topography, and other conservation maps.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS WHO PROVIDE FUNDING, IN-KIND SERVICES, MATERIALS & OTHER TYPES OF SUPPORT:

ACE Basin NERR
Beaufort County Schools
Lowcountry Institute
Beaufort County Clemson
Coastal Conservation League
Lowcountry Stormwater Partners
Lowcountry Estuarium
Beaufort County Farm Bureau Women's Committee

Coosaw Ag., LLC
Ms. Lorraine Robertson
Port Royal Sound Foundation
SC Sea Grant Consortium
Friends of Hunting Island
Town of Port Royal
Signs Now

Lowcountry RC & D
Alan A Ulmer, Jr
Claude McLeod, Jr
Denise Parsick
Cynthia Jani
Yvonne Plemmons
John O'Connell
Port Royal Farmers Market

Be a Beaufort Soil & Water Conservation District Affiliate Member

Supporting — \$35.00 Sustaining—\$50.00 Patron —\$100.00 Associate—\$100 +

Circle Level of support Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks Payable to: "Beaufort Conservation District"

Mail to: PO Box 70 Port Royal, SC 29935 Call : 843-255-7306

Email: bswcd@islc.net www.beaufortconservationdistrict.org



Name & or Company _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Thank you for your support!

Please be an Affiliate Today & Help Educate Beaufort County about Conservation of our Natural Resources!
Donations directly fund local Environmental Science education programs for our area Students!

Affiliate Members

Beaufort County School District
WH McLeod & Sons, Inc.
Lowcountry RC & D

Coosaw Ag., LLC
Ms. Cindy Jani
Ms. Denise Parsick
Beaufort County Farm Bureau Women's Committee

Ulmer Brothers, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. William Murphy
Mr. & Mrs. Russell Berry

Beaufort Soil & Water Conservation District
PO Box 70
Port Royal, SC 29935

