



Serving Beaufort County for over 78 years

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023



Otis Daise, Jr. - Daise Farm. Photo credit: Walter Mack

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, Jr., Vice Chair

Denise Parsick, Secretary/Treasurer

Luke Inabinett, Commissioner

Dannie Lesesne, Commissioner

Art Holland, Associate Commissioner

Carol Murphy, Associate Commissioner

Howard Heckrotte, Associate Commissioner

We are YOUR Conservation District working for YOU and YOUR community. We are involved in natural resource projects in all areas of Beaufort County - both urban and rural.

We are a sub-unit of state government that works in partnership with USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service and SC Department of Natural Resources to serve the conservation needs of Beaufort County.

The District is directed by a local board of volunteer commissioners who determine the local conservation needs of the county. Two of the commissioners are appointed and three are elected.



Mr. Ulmer (center) was presented with a 40 years of service pin, and Mr. McLeod (right) with a 35 years of service pin. The awards were presented by Marc Cribb, SCACD (left), on behalf of the SC DNR, Land Conservation Division for Conservation Districts.

District Staff Members:

Leslie Meola, District Manager

Hilary Gallop, Education Coordinator

Debby Way, Education Specialist

Walter Mack, Field Agent

Our Conservation Partnerships:



USDA-NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Service:
Ben Padget, Interim District Conservationist



SC Dept. of Natural Resources, Land Conservation Division:
Tyler Brown, Program Coordinator for Conservation Districts



NACD— National Association of Conservation Districts



SCACD—SC Association of Conservation Districts



SCCDEA—SC Conservation District Employees Association

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

This program helps farmers and landowners build on existing conservation efforts while strengthening their operation.

Beaufort County FY23 CSP:

- CSP payouts totalled \$3,438.00
- There are 2 active CSP contracts
- CSP applications are accepted year round. The deadline for FY24 applications will most likely be in April 2024
- Before applying to the CSP program, you need to have a farm tract number. You can get one from your local USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Inflation Reduction Act sign up deadline for FY23 was June 30th

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

This program is NRCS' flagship conservation program that helps farmers, ranchers and forest landowners integrate conservation into working lands.

Beaufort County FY23 EQIP:

- EQIP payouts totalled \$30,777.42
- 6 EQIP contracts funded:
 1. 2 for Planning
 2. 1 Sustainable Forestry
 3. 1 Seasonal High Tunnel
 4. 1 Socially Disadvantaged
 5. 1 Urban Ag Initiative
- There are 9 active EQIP contracts
- Preapproved funding pools were:
 1. Planning (for grazing management plans)
 2. Seasonal High Tunnel
 3. Sustainable Forestry Special Project (with Center for Heirs Property Preservation)
 4. Socially Disadvantaged
 5. Urban Ag Initiative



Seasonal High Tunnel

Farmers can begin crops early to extend the growing season

Please be aware that you need to notify Farm Services Agency (FSA) with any land clearing requests prior to starting the clearing, stumping, ditching, etc. at 843-726-5313.

Clemson and SC State's Climate-Smart Grown in SC program provides technical and financial support to farmers. Look into those programs if you are interested in: planting trees, cover crops, own livestock, farm vegetables. Visit <https://www.climatesmartsc.org> to find out more information.

The Nature Conservancy - Lowcountry Sentinel Landscape Partnership

In March 2023, we entered into a partnership with the Nature Conservancy of South Carolina to provide an assessment of the needs and challenges of Beaufort County farmers. TNC supplied us grant funding to hire a field agent in order to get feet on the ground to perform in-person surveys with farmers. This one year position reports quarterly to TNC of SC with the assessment findings.



The Beaufort Conservation District's Board of Commissioners hired St. Helena native, Walter Mack to fill the position of field agent. This role requires him to conduct a needs evaluation of working lands in Beaufort County in relation to:

- Regenerative farming practices
- Current participation and awareness of conservation programs
- Challenges related to climate change
- Interest in participating in programs and economic markets



Top left: Roy Green -Simply Raised Box Farm
Center left: Roger Smalls & his black angus cows- Smalls' Farm
Bottom left: Lobolly Pines- Barnwell Family Farm, LLC.



Above: Field Agent, Walter Mack discusses farming challenges with the Barnwell Family

Education

This past year Beaufort SWCD presented outreach programs to 133 classrooms, Eco Camp, and festivals reaching over 3,390 students and adults.



Hilary poses with a lower school class after learning about polar habitats (left). Debby explains how long it takes litter to decompose at our Earth Day celebration (right).



Eco Camp 2023 - *There is no EARTH without ART*

Campers discovered and created art from the natural science that is all around us. With a focus on conservation and protection of our local wildlife, campers explored and created through construction, sculptures, fabric dyeing, and more. They finished the week with a field day of game activities and lunch provided and served by the Beaufort County Farm Bureau Women's Committee. What a nice treat!!



Cast netting (left), marsh watercolor painting (center), campers developed their own waterfront property & learned about the water pollution from their upstream "neighbors" (right).



Festivals

July 2022: Beaufort Water Festival
Kids' Day

August 2022: STEAM Festival

October 2022: Shrimp Festival

January 2023: Oyster Festival

April 2023: Soft Shell Crab Festival, and
**Birthday for the Birds. We also organized
and presented Earth Day at the Port
Royal Farmers Market.**



This youngster learned about pollution & water quality from Debby using the EnviroScape model at our Earth Day celebration.



Hilary explained all about sharks at the Beaufort Water Festival Kids' Day.

Lowcountry Master Naturalist

Our Education Coordinator, Hilary Gallop (center), completed her Master Naturalist Certification in December through the Lowcountry Institute. This 12 week program offers field experiences to enable adult learners to gain first hand experience in local habitats and environmental issues of coastal South Carolina. Our Education Specialist, Debby Way, has been a Master Naturalist since 2008!



From left to right: Lowcountry Institute Education Director, Tony Mills; Naturalist, Julianna Smith; Hilary Gallop; Executive Director, Andy Jones; Annie Boyd



Battery Creek High School Envirothon Team 2023



The South Carolina Envirothon is a statewide environmental science competition for high school students. This past school year we proudly sponsored a team from Battery Creek High School (left). This was their first time competing in this event. They gained hands-on learning experiences that challenged them to explore their knowledge of aquatics, forestry, soils and wildlife. We expect they will compete again this school year!

Green Steps is a program designed to help South Carolina schools earn awards for establishing sustainability projects where students learn, do, and teach others. This was our 2nd year mentoring Bluffton Middle School students (right) with recycling and reusing, composting, litter prevention, and habitat restoration.



Bluffton Middle School student repurposes a plastic container to create a bug house for helpful garden insects (left). BLMS students set up a worm farm. Worms will be released into flower and vegetable garden beds (right).



SC Adopt-A-Stream

Our educators adopted Battery Creek at the Sands in Port Royal through the Citizen Science Project. Once a month they sample and collect data at the fishing pier. All data is uploaded to the SC AAS website for compilation. As trained volunteers, they play an important role in monitoring and tracking water quality while sharing information about local water resources with the community.



Water Quality and Conservation Partnerships





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



We are located at 124 Lady's Island Dr., Beaufort, SC 29907

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

www.beaufortconservationdistrict.org Office hours Mon– Fri- 9am–2pm

Please consider becoming an affiliate member
to help educate Beaufort County about the
conservation of our natural resources.
Donations can be made online by scanning the QR
code, by [clicking here](#), or by check.



Be a Beaufort Soil & Water Conservation District Affiliate Member

Supporting — \$35.00

Sustaining—\$50.00

Patron —\$100.00

Associate—\$100 +

Circle the level you wish to support

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks Payable to: "Beaufort Conservation District"

Mail to: PO Box 70, Port Royal, SC 29935

Name & or Company _____

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