

Beaufort Soil & Water Conservation District

2021 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:

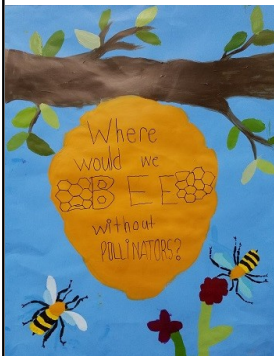
Alan A. Ulmer, Jr., Chair
 Claude McLeod, Vice Chair
 Denise Parsick, Sec/Treasurer
 Luke Inabinett, Member
 Dannie Lesesne, Member
 Art Holland, Associate
 Carol Murphy, Associate
 Howard Heckrotte, Associate

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 most 2020-21 Activities

Most festivals, events and education programs were canceled this year due to COVID-19 Virus. We did Zoom classes and we were able to do a few in-person classes and an Earth Day Festival at Parris Island. We had to cancel Eco Camp, but had Friday Adventure Days at Crystal Lake Park that was a great success. Our Commissioners started meeting in person in May 2021 and our partners have also started planning in-person meetings and events too.



From left top, a Poster Entry, Hunting Island & Low-country Raptor Presentations, and Earth Day at Parris Island



The Conservation Partnership includes:

USDA-NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Service:

Kenyetta Render, 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 Conservation District is located at 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 Office hours are Mon– Fri- 9am—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, paying out \$39,770 in EQIP, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, to over 200 acres. Practices include Conservation Ground Cover, Prescribed Burning, Tree Site Preparation and Planting, and Seasonal High Tunnels. NRCS applied technical assistance to an additional 1500 acres to improve environmental quality of the land. Four new EQIP contracts were obligated for \$32,542.

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

Seasonal High Tunnel: Farmers can start crops early to extend the growing season.	Tree Shrub/Site Prep: Backpack Sprayer treats areas to support establishment of woody plant species.	Prescribed Burn: Burning helps prevent forest fires, manages underbrush & promote new growth.
		

Welcome, Kenyetta Render, our new District Conservationist!

Kenyetta Render, originally from Atlanta, GA, graduated from Tuskegee University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental, Natural Resource and Plant Science/ Natural Resources Option. She started working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service In 2015 as a student intern under the Thurgood Marshall College Fund in Auburn, AL. Then in 2016, she did an internship in South Carolina working in the Sumter Field Office. After graduating from Tuskegee University in 2017 Kenyetta interned with the United States Forest Service as a Timber Marker in Chatsworth, GA and later moved to Sumter, SC and worked as a contractor doing programs with the NRCS Field Office in Manning, SC. After a year, she was hired on as a Soil Conservationist in Manning in Feb. 2019. In July 2020, she transferred to DeLand, FL to work as a soil conservationist. She is very happy to be back in South Carolina and is looking forward to meeting everyone when COVID restrictions are finally lifted.

Right, Conservation Cover:
Planting cover crops helps enrich the soil and prepare it for the next planting season.



Due to the COVID -19 Pandemic, we have not had any outreach programs. NRCS has not received any further guidance about hosting outreach events to the public. NRCS Office hours are from 8:00 am- 4:30pm Monday-Friday. The office is locked but we are accepting appointments only due to the Covid-19 restrictions. We are still servicing participants with field appointments while also adhering to wearing facial masks & 6 feet social distancing. Ms. Render hopes to get more programs installed moving into the 2022 Fiscal Year.

USDA-NRCS Field Office—Kenyetta Render, District Conservationist

7554 W. Main Street, Room 128 Mailing: PO Box 190 Ridgeland, SC 29936

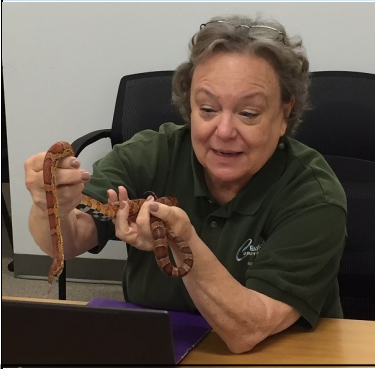
Phone 843-726-8148 Fax 843-726-5763

Conservation & Education Outreach

Friday Adventure Days

Elementary students enjoyed two days of programs at Crystal Lake Park and one day at Hunting Island sponsored by Friends of Hunting Island, People's Park Project. They hiked around the lake, identified birds, learned what makes

a fish a fish, made fish prints, met Checkers the snake, had marsh and beach hikes, dissected owl pellets to learn what owls eat, and watched the Lowcountry Raptors presentation!



Debby Way Zooming with Checkers Jr. for Lady's Island Middle School.



HHES exploring the Soil Tunnel and earthworms!



“Where Would We BEE Without Pollinators?” Poster Contest



Students across Beaufort County were invited to submit posters for the NACD Poster Contest about why pollinators are so important to us. Commissioner Denise Parsick presented the poster winners with their cash prizes, certificates and gift bags as their families watched. Two posters were submitted to the SCCDEA for state judging. We are fortunate to have such wonderful artists.

Leadership Beaufort Tour

The Fall Leadership Beaufort Class enjoyed part of their environmental day at Crystal Lake Park. Denise Parsick talked to the group about the history of improving water quality in Beaufort County and why it is so important to us all. Small groups came in to the building for a brief lobby tour and a small tour of the Crystal Lake Park Trail, although it started raining. Caylor Romines, BCOLT, lead the trail walk and pointed out wildlife and other features of the lake.

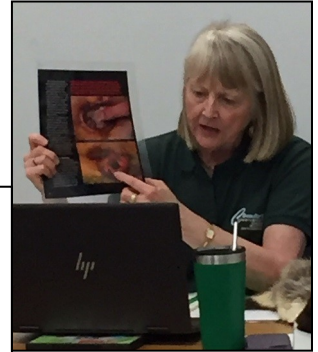


Education: Beaufort SWCD presented **57 in person programs & festivals** including Zoom classes as well as distributing **51 take home activity booklets** reaching **935 students & adults**.

Community: Commissioners & Staff Zoomed **25 meetings with over 590 partners**. Staff provided **technical assistance to 29 citizens**. Staff assisted about **365 visitors** and county staff at Crystal Lake Park. Staff assisted **98 citizens and FOHI staff members** with Friends of Hunting Island Memberships. Commissioners and staff **attended 8 training workshops and webinars**.

Eco Camp XXXI: We hope to bring “Back to the Basics” next summer, focusing on the variety of natural resources that we all depend on so much for our basic needs, recreation, and survival!

Volunteer Pam Floyd Zooms with students with the SC Fur Bearers Program.



SC Department of Natural Resources

Beaufort SWCD continues its strong partnership with the SC Department of Natural Resources. DNR has been a great resource for us during this COVID Pandemic and has provided guidance since there have been many questions about protecting our employees, financial assistance for furloughed employees and more. We continue working together with statewide activities & education events, SWCD laws & procedures, and in depth staff training. The new DNR fishing and hunting 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 technical assistance with water quality issues as well as education and volunteer opportunities to area students and adults. Throughout the year they have been providing virtual training opportunities. We really appreciate all of the wonderful support Beaufort County receives from our local DNR experts! <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/marine/NERR/>.

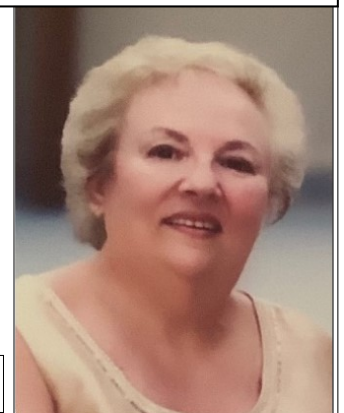


Our county continues to struggle with litter along the roadways, which ends up polluting our rivers, creeks, and the ocean as well as attracting wildlife onto our roads to be killed. Hundreds of volunteers pick up trash through Palmetto Pride’s Adopt-a-Highway Program. In 2020 there were 98 Adopt-a-Highway Groups & 10 Adopt-A-Boat Landing Groups. These groups held 425 litter collections totaling 4,858 hours of volunteer work! They collected 6,186 bags weighing 92,790 pounds! Beaufort County is very fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers! You can read the full 2020 Adopt a Highway Report for Beaufort County at https://www.beaufortcountysc.gov/solid-waste-and-recycle/adopt-a-highway/AAH_2020_Newsletter.pdf.

Phyllis Atkins Retires

Phyllis Atkins, Trails Coordinator, retired from our staff in March 2021. After working as SC DHEC’s Community Health, Safety, and Trails Coordinator, Ms. Atkins joined our staff 20 years ago and continued the same work to create several trails, outdoor classrooms, and the first Blueways trail in Beaufort County. She had also been a long time member of the SC Parks, Recreation and Tourism Board and locally helped explain the PRT Grant process. We thank you, Phyllis, for your decades of service and the long legacy of nature trails for everyone to enjoy for years to come.

Right: Phyllis Atkins retired March 2021.



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 County* by leading the T4BC 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 many members belong to both groups. Each meeting has a special presentation on a relevant topic as well as partner updates and upcoming events. Clemson Extension Water Resources Agent, Ellen Comeau has provided a Zoom format for us to meet virtually. Contact us to join.



Green Steps Schools: River Ridge Academy was the only school in Beaufort County that participated in the Green Steps Schools programs this past year. They do a great job incorporating Green Activities throughout the year in several classes. Check out the Green Step programs and school websites at <http://greenstepschools.com/> Contact us or any of the mentors on line to assist your school in becoming a Green Steps School!

Friends of Port Royal Cypress Wetlands: Beaufort Conservation District has partnered with the Friends of Port Royal Cypress Wetlands. We shared our **Cypress Wetlands Activity Booklet** and it can be downloaded from their website. Choose Menu, Interactive, & then the Activity Center to find the download tab. Printed copies are available at our office. The website has gorgeous pictures and plenty of information about the wetlands. Support the Friends and receive a logo decal (seen to the right). [Friends of Port Royal Cypress Wetlands](http://www.friendsofportroyalcypreswetlands.org).



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.

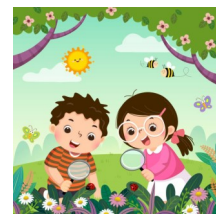
Mail donations to:
Clemson University Foundation
P.O. Box 1889
Clemson, SC 29633
Include Reference # 539,
McCracken Scholarship Fund



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 a 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 Clemson Extension
Coastal Conservation League
Lowcountry Stormwater Partners
Beaufort County Farm Bureau
Women's Committee

Lowcountry RC & D
Port Royal Farmers Market
Port Royal Sound Foundation
SC Sea Grant Consortium
Friends of Hunting Island
Lowcountry Estuarium
The Beaufort SWCD Board of Commissioner & Associates are all non paid volunteers working for our Community!

Denise Parsick
Carol Murphy
John O'Connell
Yvonne Plemmons
Town of Port Royal
Signs Now

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
Beaufort County
Lowcountry RC & D
Mr. & Mrs. Claude McLeod, Jr.

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

Ulmer Brothers, Inc.
WH McLeod & Sons, Inc.
Chisolm Island Plantation

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

