

Beaufort Soil & Water Conservation District 2022 Annual Report

Serving Beaufort County for over 77 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	Dannie Lesesne, Member
Claude McLeod, Vice Chair	Art Holland, Associate
Denise Parsick, Sec/Treasurer	Carol Murphy, Associate
Luke Inabinett, Member	Howard Heckrotte, Associate

District Staff Members:

Leslie Meola, District Manager
Annie Boyd, Education Coordinator
Debby Way, Education Specialist
Hilary Gallop, Education Specialist

Shelby Berry—Long Time District Manager Retires

On June 30, 2022, Shelby Berry officially retired from her role as District Manager. Shelby joined us as a volunteer and then for almost two decades she was our amazing District Manager, juggling all the facets of our programs and conservation education efforts in Beaufort County. For several years she managed to keep us within budget when times were lean. She coordinated the physical move from Port Royal to CLP which involved more than seven years to finalize. She did an incredible job managing all facets of the organization, including state and federal board requirements, budgets and finance, employees and related education programming, and office management. Through the years, Shelby implemented and helped present our education programs to include classroom presentations, festival participation, Eagle Scout projects, our Eco Camp week, and assisting in the classroom when needed! To be a successful District Manager you must be able to do everything and Shelby did an amazing job! She will be greatly missed but we know she will be available to help when needed!



Our Conservation Partnerships

USDA-NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Service:
Kenyetta Render, District Conservationist

SC Dep. of Natural Resources, Land Conservation Division:
Tyler Brown, Program Manager for Conservation Districts

Beaufort County Council,
Natural Resources Committee

NACD— National Association of
Conservation Districts

SCCDEA—SC Conservation
District Employees Association

SCACD—SC Association of
Conservation Districts



Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program

NRCS completed a variety of practices geared to preserve landowners' resource concerns. NRCS has paid out \$30,588.33 during the 2022 fiscal year. NRCS has applied conservation to roughly 200 + acres of land in Beaufort County. Completed practices includes Conservation Cover, Tree Shrub Site Preparation and Planting, and Seasonal High Tunnels. NRCS also applied technical assistance geared to improve Environmental Quality on 1500 acres.



Herbaceous Weed Treatment

Enhances forage quality for wildlife habitat, protects soil, reduces wildfire hazard



Seasonal High Tunnel

Farmers can begin crops early to extend the growing season



Conservation Cover; Pollinators

Planting cover crops help enrich the soil and prepare it for the next planting season



Left: Tree Shrub/Site Preparation

Backpack spray treats areas to support establishment of woody plant species

Right: Tree Planting Preparing land to plant Loblolly Pine



CSP: Conservation Stewardship Program

As the 2022 Fiscal Year has ended, NRCS started issuing out CSP Payments as of October 1st. NRCS will obligate about \$3,200 for CSP contract holders.

USDA-NRCS Field Office—Kenyetta Render, District Conservationist

kenyetta.render@usda.gov 843-726-8148

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Beaufort Soil and Water Conservation District helped a gated community in southern Beaufort County get relief from feral hogs. The hogs were destroying landscape around homes incurring thousands of dollars of damage along this New River neighborhood. **USDA APHIS** is working to capture and dispatch the invasive species. To date they have captured 45 hogs.



SC Department of Natural Resources

BSWCD maintains its strong partnership with the SC Department of Natural Resources. We continue working together with statewide activities and education events, SWCD laws and procedures, and in-depth staff training. The new DNR fishing and hunting handouts are available at our office. Additional 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 and in-person 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/>.

SC Conservation District Employees Association



BSWCD hosted the 2021 Annual Training Conference September 19-21, 2021 for the **SCCDEA**. The event was attended by representatives from 23 SC Conservation Districts, as well as representatives from SCACD and SCDNR. It was our privilege to have Dale Threatt-Taylor as the Keynote Speaker. Dale is the Executive Director for The Nature Conservancy in South Carolina.

Commissioners Hire New Employees

Leslie Meola was hired in February to take on the role of **District Manager**. She worked under Mrs. Berry's training until her official retirement at the end of June. Mrs. Meola lived the majority of her professional career in New Hampshire in a variety of administrative and management roles. She and her family relocated to Beaufort in 2016 which led her to jobs with Beaufort Academy and Beaufort High School.

Annie Boyd signed on in March as the District's **Education Coordinator**. Ms. Boyd's marine science and biology knowledge, along with her passion for wildlife, equips her to spread her love and appreciation for the Lowcountry to our local future environmentalists. She believes environmental education is important because it allows students to explore their environment, build their own connections, and find a sense of responsibility for themselves and their surroundings.

Hilary Gallop began her employment in April as an **Education Specialist**. Mrs. Gallop's environmental studies background and her fervor for adventure makes her an efficacious environmental educator. Teaching about the environment and conservation is important to her as she believes that to preserve the Lowcountry life style, we need to encourage and educate each other on how to do that.

Conservation and Education Outreach

Education: This past year Beaufort SWCD presented 210 classroom, camp, and festival outreach programs reaching over 3,860 students and adults.

Festivals: Beaufort SWCD planned and presented Earth Day at the Port Royal Farmers Market. District staff worked on the Kidfest planning committee as well as setting up an outreach booth and supplying volunteer staff to help with the hospitality booth. Staff and educators also presented at the Soft Shell Crab Festival, and Birthday for the Birds.

Eco Camp 2022: We were thrilled to host camp again after a 2 year break due to COVID-19. With help from Meghan Barkley, Clemson 4H Extension Agent, campers learned about farm conservation. Focusing on local natural resources, campers explored topics ranging from the water cycle, pollinators, papermaking, water usage, forestry, and gardening and growing crops such as cotton, tomatoes & watermelon. They finished the week with a Field Day at Crystal Lake Park where they participated in fun Agriculture Olympic activities. We greatly appreciated the lunch Beaufort County Farm Bureau Women's Committee provided. What a treat!



Left: Campers learned how to recycle used paper to make new paper. **Middle:** Our Olympians sporting their Eco Camp T-shirts accompanied by their team captains. **Right:** Will the campers remember the embryology lesson? Probably not. Will they remember the chick they named Lemon? Always.



Above: Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority taught the campers about water quality and how Beaufort County gets their drinking water.

Right: Beekeeper Linda Peters worked hard at inspiring future beekeepers.



Above: The campers assisted coring a tree with the SC Forestry Commission.



Green Steps Schools: Bluffton Middle School was the only school in Beaufort County that participated in the Green Steps Schools programs this past year. They did 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 online to assist your school in becoming a Green Steps School!

Water Quality and 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.



Local Work Group

The Local Work Group for Beaufort and Jasper Counties met on July 21. This year the focus was on the priority areas of concern and then review of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) ranking questions. Their input into the ranking of resource concerns is critical to the success of these programs in Beaufort and Jasper Counties. The decisions made by the group are a significant factor in determining how Federal funds will be distributed to applicants in the Salkehatchie Watershed under the EQIP.

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.



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

Technical Support to landowners, 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

Special thanks to the following partners who provide in-kind services, materials, and other types of support:

SC Marine Educator Association	Gullah Farmers' Cooperative	Town of Port Royal
Beaufort County Schools	Port Royal Farmers Market	Friends of Hunting Island
Lowcountry Institute	Port Royal Sound Foundation	ACE Basin NERR
Beaufort Clemson Extension	SC Sea Grant Consortium	John O'Connell
Lowcountry Stormwater Partners	Coastal Conservation League	Meredith Murphy
Beaufort County Farm Bureau Women's Committee		April Busby
The BSWCD Board of Commissioner & Associates are all non paid volunteers working for our community!		

The Passing of Paula Berube

Sunday, July 31, 2022, we celebrated the amazing life and accomplishments of Paula at the Beaufort Conservation District Office at Crystal Lake Park. Her friends at Palmetto Animal League started it off with their appreciation of Paula through PAL and her love of all animals. Paula helped PAL in so many ways, it was awesome to learn of them through Amy and her many PAL friends in attendance. Paula's neighbors also shared stories of the joy she brought to all of them. Childhood friends spoke of how they loved her as a devoted friend through their adulthood. Her Conservation District and Hunting Island friends told of her educational, artistic, and organizational contributions. We even spoke of her opossum, Olive Oil, who she brought to classrooms and events to teach the importance of these animals. Everyone who knew her, loved and appreciated her. Farewell Dear Friend.. you will always be loved by all who knew you...

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 _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

District education programs reach students of all ages, classroom teachers, and members of the public. Affiliates of BSWCD are a vital part of our conservation team. The annual financial support given by affiliates helps us carry out our conservation and stewardship programs within the County. Our classroom programs for Beaufort County schools reaches hundreds of students each year. Please support our efforts by becoming an affiliate today! Contributions are tax deductible.

Affiliate Members

Coosaw Ag., LLC
Chisolm Island Plantation, LLC
Mr. & Mrs. Claude McLeod, Jr.

Ulmer Brothers, Inc.
Denise Parsick

W.H. McLeod & Son-South, LLC
Carol Murphy



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Port Royal, SC 29935

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Website: www.beaufortconservationdistrict.org Office hours are Mon– Fri- 9am—2pm