

South Carolina's Current Developments

Helping People Help the Land

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Fall 2006

From the Office of the
State Conservationist
Walter W. Douglas



In this issue...

Notes from the field
.....pgs. 2-4
Cultural Awareness
Day 2006

.....pg. 5
NRCS Welcomes
New Chief

.....pg. 6
East Region Earth
Team Meeting
in Charleston

.....pgs. 6-7
Partnership News

.....pg. 9
Meet Our New
Employees

.....pg. 11
Remembering
Dwayne Mangum

.....pg. 12
Personnel News

.....pg. 13
Conservation Photo
Contest

.....pg. 14

Dear NRCsers,

As the end of FY 2006 rapidly approaches, I wanted to let you all know how much I appreciate your efforts this year. From getting conservation on the ground, to reaching out to landowners to inform them about our programs and services, you have all done an exemplary job to help people help the land in South Carolina. Your efforts resulted in 100% completion of our performance goals, and we received additional financial assistance to help our state's producers conserve soil and water resources.

I also want to thank you, and our conservation partners, for a successful year of support to the Earth Team. South Carolina was the host for the East Region State Volunteer Coordinator Training in August. I was proud of the volunteer success stories that we shared, and I will continue to support your efforts to strengthen our volunteer program in the coming year.

As we enter the first quarter of FY 2007, we will be hosting several training sessions for field office staff. This includes training on the new Activity Based Cost (ABC) system, the ranking tool, and training for NRI. It is important that we provide these sessions to keep field staff current on the changing technologies. Also early in FY 2007, South Carolina will host the East Region State Conservationist meeting. NRCS Chief Arlen Lancaster will be in attendance, and I am looking forward to showcasing some of the outstanding conservation success stories of our state.

In closing, I would like to say how much our agency already misses District Conservationist Dwayne Mangum who passed away this month. He was an outstanding conservationist, a loyal husband and father, and a great friend to many. Dwayne was one-of-a-kind and he will be missed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walter W. Douglas". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "W" and "D".

Notes from the Field



Lancaster Conservation Partnership Helps Open Farmers Market

The Lancaster Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association opened a new farmers market at Ace Hardware and Garden Center in Lancaster, SC, on July 1, 2006.

During the summer, the Association sold fresh, locally-grown produce on Wednesdays and Saturdays. This gave Lancaster natives an alternative source of fresh fruits and vegetables.



The Lancaster Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association opened a new farmers market at Ace Hardware and Garden Center.

The Association's advisor is Lancaster NRCS District Conservationist Ann Christie, and the Lancaster SWCD sponsors the market. "Opening day was wonderful. We had over 30 customers, and were sold out by noon," Christie said.

Ace Hardware and Garden Center owner Regina Butz approached the association last winter and asked if members would be willing to set up and operate a farmers market under a shed next to the parking lot. "I was looking for a way to get more people on the property and to provide an in-town market for fresh produce," she said.

According to Association President Mae Barber, some members who sell from their homes were glad to see the creation of the market. "If you have a sign in front of your house for fresh fruits and vegetables, only those people driving on that road see it," she said. "Ace Hardware is on a main street in Lancaster, so lots of people see the sign."

Marion USDA Service Center Hosts Awareness Luncheon

The Marion County USDA Service Center hosted an *Outreach and Social Awareness* luncheon on June 13, 2006. NRCS/DNR Wildlife Biologist Meg McElveen presented a slide show about her experiences in South Africa. Meg received her Bachelor's in Biology from Virginia Tech and her

graduate degree in Conservation Ecology from the University of Pretoria in South Africa. During her two years in South Africa, Meg's graduate research focused on elephant growth and age determination.



NRCS/DNR Wildlife Biologist Meg McElveen completed her graduate studies in South Africa, focusing on elephant growth and age determination. She made a presentation about her experience at Marion County's USDA Outreach Luncheon in June.

She also presented and discussed slides of various wildlife species native to South Africa, as well as slides showing the beautifully diverse landscape.

P.O.W.E.R for Wildlife Committee Presents Education Grants

Thanks to the success of the P.O.W.E.R. (*Protecting Our Wildlife at Every Right-of-Way*) for Wildlife Program and the Seed Program, a wide variety of grants were awarded to SWCD's, outreach education programs, and other entities. The P.O.W.E.R. for Wildlife Steering Committee began a Youth Grant Program in 2004. The grants were designed to assist programs that promote or enhance environmental awareness among youth.

One example of an education program that has benefited from the P.O.W.E.R. Youth Grant Program is the Cypress Gardens Education Program, which will now be able to offer their programs to many lower income students.

Other grant awardees included the Beaufort SWCD Outreach Education Program, Anderson SWCD Earth Camp, Blythewood-by-Design Nature Trail at Blythewood High School, and the

Schoolyard Habitats Program sponsored by the SC Wildlife Federation.

A large number of \$1,000 grants were also awarded. Among these were the Orangeburg SWCD 4H2O Program (which promotes water quality education), the Anderson County 4H2O Pontoon Classroom, Blue Heron Learning Center, South Carolina Institute for Natural Resource Conservation, Beaufort SWCD's Wildlife of the Estuarium, and the Barnwell SWCD.

The 4-H Natural Resources and Shooting Sports Camp and Newberry SWCD's Camp Conservation both won \$750 grants. Seven \$500 grants were also presented. P.O.W.E.R. for Wildlife is administered by electric power companies.

Earth Team Volunteers Get a Taste of the Rural Life in Horry County

This summer, three NRCS Earth Team volunteers (working in partnership with the Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council (EOC), Inc.—a community action agency serving Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties—and the Horry SWCD), contributed 480 hours to the Horry Conservation Partnership. NRCS Earth Team volunteers work side by side with professional conservationists in many areas including conservation education, public information, clerical duties, engineering, inputting data into computers, and putting conservation on the ground.

The three young adults enrolled in the EOC's Youth Employment Training Skills (YETS) Program to gain experience in the workplace. Glenn Brown Jr., Desiree McCray, and Ruben Villao worked throughout the summer to help the Horry Conservation Partnership (NRCS and the SWCD) organize files. The students are all eleventh graders, and they were excited to get a taste of the 'real

world' by working in the office. "Through this experience, they were able to see what a typical day-to-day work setting is like, and they were also able to practice customer service skills," explained acting NRCS District Conservationist Rebecca Harper.

The students were surprised by all the work that goes into running the office, and because they were all raised in urban environments, it was interesting for them to learn about rural life. Two of the three volunteers grew up in Horry County, which is the fastest growing county in the state. The students were surprised to learn about the amount of agriculture that is still prevalent in the county, even among the ever-growing tourism industry.

Throughout the summer, the three Earth Team volunteers converted an old filing system and enhanced the NRCS filing system by creating six-part folders. District employee and Horry Earth Team Coordinator Nina Warren said, "It is great to see young people who want to learn more about conservation and actually get hands-on experience in the workplace." More than 1,000 conservation plans were re-filed and updated and nearly one-hundred program files were converted into six part folders.

The computer whiz of the group is Ruben (who grew up in Union City, New Jersey), and his goal is to become a computer engineer. He worked side-by-side with Sammy Johnson, NRCS soil conservation technician, and learned about global positioning system (GPS) technology.

Warren has worked with similar summer interns for three years now, and overall has volunteered over 1,000 of her time to lead seven summer interns. "I enjoy watching these students learn about the importance of conservation, and how they can help make a difference in the health of our soil and water resources." Together, the Earth Team and the Waccamaw EOC are exposing young adults to the world of conservation and helping people help the land.



Back row left to right is Horry SWCD's Nina Warren with Waccamaw EOC Project Coordinator Shaunte Richard. Earth Team Volunteers in the front row are Ruben Villao, Glenn Brown, and Desiree McCray.

Bishopville Soil Survey Office Coordinates Soil Sampling Project

by Charlie Ogg, Soil Survey Party Leader

South Carolina's NRCS Soil Survey Gang is at it again! We're working to improve the soil information we provide to our NRCS customers and

other landusers across the Palmetto State. The Bishopville Soil Survey office recently hosted a sampling project designed to investigate several soil series with restrictive layers. These soils occur widely across the Atlantic Coastal Plain

of South Carolina and other southeastern states. The information gained will update both agricultural and non-agricultural soil interpretations regionally.

Leading the project were Mike Wilson (Research Soil Scientist in the National Soil Survey Center, Lincoln, Nebraska), and John Kelley (the MO14 Soil Data Quality Specialist from Raleigh, NC). They joined South Carolina's soil scientists in Lee and Sumter counties during the week of May 15th to sample 11 soil pits representing five soil series. SC NRCS employees participating included Charlie Ogg, Caleb Gulley, Jackie Reed, Larry Garner, Shawna Schrecengost, Emory Holsonback, Myra Jones, Lance Brewington, Ron Morton, Dennis DeFrancesco, and Bob Eppinette. The project provided not only a great opportunity to view the soils, exchange ideas, and haggle about the nuances of soil descriptions and soil classification; it served as an excellent training activity to learn detailed soil sampling.

We investigated Ailey, Barnwell, Cowarts, Dothan, and Fuquay soils. Dothan and Fuquay soils have plinthite in the subsoil. The term plinthite has its origin in the Greek word *plinthos*, meaning brick, so as you would expect, plinthite is a hard, iron-rich concentration known to chew up auger teeth with a passion. Ailey, Barnwell, and Cowarts are thought to have fragic soil properties. The term fragic is modified from the Latin word *fragilis*, meaning brittle.



NRCSers Jackie Reed (left) and Caleb Gulley with the bulk density clod catch-of-the-day.

Both plinthite and fragic properties are accountable for many nights of good sleep after days of boring holes in soils.

The hard and brittle soil layers affect the ease of excavation, deter root penetration, and impede water movement through the subsoil. Plants often have a hard time eating and drinking from these soils because roots turn horizontally atop these layers. Horizontal root growth also affects rooting depth and anchoring of trees; i.e. the trees will blow over easily with a strong puff from the wind. Water flows slowly through these layers affecting interpretations such as disposal of sewage and agricultural wastewater. The Lincoln lab will analyze the samples for particle size, chemical, and mineral differences. Bulk density clod analysis will tell us exactly how dense the soils are and improve estimates for hydraulic conductivity. Other chemical analyses will identify which elements play the greatest role as hardening or cementing agents, or to put it another way, "What makes these soils so tough!?" We will populate the National Soil Information System (NASIS) database with the new data. Ultimately, the updated interpretations will be available to customers via the Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>) and Soil Data Mart (<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>), so be on the lookout for the latest soil information at a web site near you!

NRCS and RD Celebrate Cultural Awareness *"Hand In Hand--Together We Can"* *Highlights Different Cultures*

The 11th Annual USDA Cultural Awareness Day (CAD) was held on August 24, 2006, at White Oak Conference Center in Winnsboro, SC. NRCS and Rural Development (RD) planned the event which was a day of fun, diversity and cultural enlightenment. Topics of discussion included West African Culture, Native American Culture and Understanding the Crisis in Iran and Iraq.

NRCS also presented the 2006 State Civil Rights Award. NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas presented NRCS Small Farmer Liaison Wilfred Pace with a plaque for his outstanding efforts to reach out to small farmers.



photos: Sabrenna Bryant, NRCS



NRCSers from around the state enjoyed visiting with each other during Cultural Awareness Day 2006.



above: Cultural Awareness Day Chair Lynette Savereno (Pee Dee RC&D Coordinator) shared a personal story about cultural awareness with the meeting attendees.



above: NRCS and RD employees joined in a dance lesson given by performers from Andande African Drum and Dance group.



left: NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas (left) presented Small Farmer Liaison Wilfred Pace with the 2006 State Civil Rights Award.

NRCS Welcomes Chief Arlen Lancaster

Appointed August 23, 2006, Arlen Lancaster heads the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the primary agency for voluntary conservation on working agricultural lands. As the thirteenth Chief for the agency, he directs the work of 12,000 employees and manages a budget totaling nearly \$3.2 billion.

Before joining NRCS, Mr. Lancaster served as USDA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. Previously he worked for the Congress in a variety of positions including senior policy advisor for Senator Mike Crapo, staff director for the Senate Subcommittee on Forestry, Conservation, and Rural Revitalization and staff member for Senator Robert Bennett. He played a key role in crafting the conservation title of the 2002 farm bill.

As NRCS chief executive officer, Mr. Lancaster guides the agency in helping people help the land through locally-led, cooperative conservation programs. Under his direction, NRCS works with private landowners and partners to conserve, maintain and improve natural resources, which supports sustainable agriculture and enhances the environment. NRCS conservation partnerships provide public environmental benefits such as a cleaner environment, clear and abundant water, increased biological diversity and a scenic landscape.

A graduate of the University of Utah, Mr. Lancaster is the first Asian American Chief of NRCS. He is an avid fly fisherman and outdoorsman. He and his wife Staci live in Alexandria, Va.



Arlen Lancaster is the new NRCS Chief.

Walt Douglas Receives Circle of Excellence Award

NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas was presented with a Circle of Excellence pin by former NRCS Chief Bruce I. Knight. Douglas received the pin for serving on the Chief's Advisory Council and providing tremendous help to leadership. Congratulations Mr. Douglas!

East Region State Earth Team Volunteer Coordinators Converge in Historic Charleston

The East Region Earth Team had a State Volunteer Coordinators training August 14-17th in Charleston, South Carolina. The theme of the meeting was "The Spirit of America Shines through Volunteers."

Earth Team Coordinators from Vermont to Puerto Rico gathered to talk about strengthening the Earth Team, enhancing recruiting efforts, and recording volunteer hours. Meeting participants even got an up-close-and personal experience in dune restoration when they visited nearby Sullivan's Island. A local Earth Team volunteer coordinated the workday during which attendees planted dune plants and erected sand fencing. This event received media attention, and two local newspapers and television stations arrived on scene to capture the volunteer efforts.

SC NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas welcomed the attendees and emphasized his support of the Earth Team. "Volunteers are an important part of the NRCS mission and

South Carolina is pleased to be the site of this important training which allows Earth Team coordinators to share ideas and network." Over twenty states were represented at the meeting.



Lowcountry RC&D Coordinator Steve Edwards (left) and Earth Team Volunteer Bill Wilkes prepared a wonderful Lowcountry Boil for the meeting attendees. They also coordinated a dune restoration work-day on Sullivan's Island.



East Region State Earth Team Coordinators enjoyed a hands-on dune restoration work day at Sullivan's Island.



NRCS State Public Affairs Specialist Amy O. Maxwell was interviewed by several Charleston television stations and newspapers about the Earth Team.

Private Landowner Network Connects Farmers to Conservation Professionals

Private Landowner Network (PLN) was created in 2000 by the *Resources First Foundation* (RFF) as the first, and currently, only national informational resource and database on the internet designed to address the needs of private landowners and the symbiotic businesses dependent on the private landowner's market. The tools and information resources on PLN provide a simple and effective means for landowners to connect with qualified, often local, professionals to navigate the complex ins and outs of real estate transactions, tax and estate planning and land conservation. PLN enables landowners to access local land trusts and nonprofit conservation organizations, as well as the bewildering array of federal and state financing and technical assistance options.

The PLN resource database provides access to local conservation experts, funding resources and

technical and legal service providers. In a partnership with USDA-NRCS, RFF helped design and build the web-based Energy Estimator tools. Farmers and ranchers can cut input costs, maintain production, protect soil and water resources, reduce dependence on fossil fuels and save money using these practical conservation internet tools. For more information, contact PLN Project Developer Williard Dyche at (207)221-2753 or visit the website at

<http://www.privatelandownernetwork.org/>.

Spartanburg Family Farm Spans the Generations

by Amy O. Maxwell, State Public Affairs Specialist

"Mr. Jimmy" Belue of Spartanburg, South Carolina, can honestly say that farming is a family tradition at his 2,000-acre operation. That's because his wife (Betty) and his son and daughter (Mike and Harriett) still work together everyday to manage the farm. For over fifty years, they have worked as a family unit to grow everything from small grains and other silage crops, to brood cows, peaches, and even daylilies.

Daughter Harriet left the farm to work in private industry for a time, but soon realized that she missed farming. "I discovered that I could use the marketing techniques I practiced in private industry here on the farm, and at the same time, I could spend more time with my family, including my son." Harriet's marketing experience has been useful as the Belue's try to respond and keep up with customer demand. "We thought it was important to diversify our operation," explained Harriet, who manages the farm's finances. Their roadside store boasts beautiful fruits and vegetables, homemade preserves and sauces, and even sweet breads. On a warm and muggy August morning, the store is busy with local



left to right: NRCS District Conservationist Charles Banks, Farm Manager Mike Belue, "Mr. Jimmy" Belue, Betty Belue, and Farm Manager Harriet Belue.

shoppers stocking up for the last time this year as Belue's will close shop until next spring.

The Belue's are also dedicated conservationists who want to protect and improve the soil and water resources that sustain their business. That's one of the reasons that they converted their operation to one-hundred percent no-till. Mike Belue is a firm believer in conservation tillage, not only the environmental benefits, but also the cost and time savings. "Switching to no-till helped save our family farm, because otherwise, we were lacking the manpower and energy costs that tilling required." He also said that the equipment and chemicals available today for a no-till operation have come a long way. "The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helped us get started with no-till, and now, I can't imagine farming any other way." EQIP is a voluntary conservation program of USDA-NRCS. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management



For over fifty years, the Belue's have worked as a family unit to grow everything from small grains and other silage crops, to brood cows, peaches, and even daylilies.

conservation practices on agricultural land.

NRCS District Conservationist Charles Banks has worked with the Belue's for several years. "The Belue's switched to no-till about five years ago, and since that time, there has been a significant decrease in soil erosion around their crops," said Banks. "No-till planting minimizes erosion because seeds are planted directly through the plant residue left from the previous crop, without plowing the field." While no-till farming may take years to illustrate significant benefits, once they do, farmers are sold on the idea. "No-till changed the way that I look at farming," explained Mike. "It requires me to think ahead, and do a little planning, but in the end, it really saves me time and money, so it's a win-win situation."

The Belue family farm is a great example of several generations coming together to carry on a tradition. And, according to the family, it's a tradition that they all love. "I can remember my father telling me, even when farming wasn't profitable, that he wouldn't do anything differently," remembers Harriett. "He taught us that farmers are risk-takers, and we've had to make some changes throughout the years in order to survive as a family farm, but it's been worth it and we are still here."

For more information on conservation assistance available through Farm Bill programs, or for details on the 2007 EQIP sign up, visit www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/programs.





News from Our Partners



Georgetown District Initiates Private Property Cost-Share Program with Conservation Partners

A model program to encourage control of invasive species on private property has been initiated in Georgetown County, South Carolina. The Winyah Bay Invasive Species Cost-share Program uses a combination of federal, state, and private grant assistance to reimburse landowners for the cost of control measures. The pilot program is initially focusing on the control of Phragmites, an invasive aquatic grass, but may be expanded to other species if it proves successful. The purpose of the program is to encourage the control of invasive species on private property. "We can control Phragmites and other invasive species on public lands and waters all day," says DNR's Steve de Kozlowski, Chairman of the Aquatic Plant Management Council, "but if it's still growing next door, it will come right back and we've wasted a lot of money."

The Georgetown Soil and Water Conservation District is administering the program with \$130,000 in funding provided by the SC Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Historic Ricefields Association. Other public partners include Clemson Extension Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited.

Lancaster SWCD Commissioner Selected for Hall of Fame

Glenn Alexander, Lancaster Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner, was recently selected for the 2006 Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame. Alexander accepted the award during the Southeast Region NACD Meeting in Asheville, NC, August 27-29, 2006.

Five nominations were received for the 2006 Conservation Hall of Fame Award. The Partnership Quality Steering Team (PQST) committee, which consists of representatives from DNR, USDA-NRCS, SCACD, District Employees, and RC&D reviewed the nominations and selected the winner of the 2006 award. Other candidates submitted were: Mr. Henry

Nicholson, Bamberg; Mr. Thomas Garrison, Sr., Anderson; Mr. Yancey McLeod, Richland; and Mr. Allen Beer, Chester. Thanks to the individuals and districts who submitted nominations. Congratulations to the nominees and to Mr. Alexander for this honor.

Partners for Trout Receives Donation

Partners for Trout, a coalition that has renovated and restored many miles of trout streams in South Carolina's Upstate region, recently received a \$1,000 donation from Columbia-based Saluda River Trout Unlimited.

Since its inception in 1997, Partners for Trout has received considerable impetus from private and public donations, grants and volunteer assistance and has done streambank, riparian and instream restoration on six miles of streams. Partners for Trout has also installed more than a dozen bottom-water-release structures on dams, which has improved water quality (cooled the releases in summer) in more than 50 miles of streams.

Partners for Trout, based in Clemson, is a coalition comprised of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, the Pickens, Greenville and Oconee Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Foothills Resource Conservation and Development Council, Trout Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and private landowners. The group is committed to restoring and enhancing trout streams in South Carolina. Trout streams appear in only a small portion of three counties in South Carolina: Oconee, Pickens and Greenville.

Calhoun Falls Students Compete in Canon Envirothon

Students from Calhoun Falls in Abbeville County traveled to Winnipeg, Canada, July 23 to compete in the Canon Envirothon competition.

The Calhoun Falls team scored the highest at the state competition held in May, and congregated with other first-place teams from 44 states and eight Canadian provinces to compete at the national level. Each year the competition focuses on a different topic, where the students are judged on a series of questions and evaluated on oral presentations. The chosen topic for this year's competition was "Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate."

At the awards banquet the top teams were announced with Virginia, Pennsylvania, Texas, California and Ohio taking top honors. Although the Calhoun Falls team did not place within the top five, they enjoyed their experience in Winnipeg and the opportunity to compete at the nationally recognized event.

The University of Manitoba played host to the almost 500 Envirothon competitors and their state chaperones. The week long event included registration, an opening ceremony, a trading session on Sunday, team training on Monday and Tuesday, testing on Wednesday, oral presentation preparation on Thursday, and presentations Friday morning.

The students at Calhoun Falls wish to thank the Envirothon Committee and all the sponsors of the program for allowing them to experience Winnipeg and the Canon Envirothon competition.



Students from Calhoun Falls in Abbeville County traveled to Canada for the Canon Envirothon.

Picking Up the Pieces after Katrina:

NRCS Employee Performs EWP Work

Detail in Louisiana

by Russell Anderson, NRCS Soil Conservation Tech.

Hot, humid, and long days can only begin to describe the experience of my detail to Louisiana to work on Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP). The opportunity to work with people from different states was great, and we all had one common goal in mind. That was to give the employees in that area a chance to go home and spend a little time with their families, because many of them have been working constantly since the storm hit.

The EOC (Emergency Operations Center) is where it all begins. During our orientation period, we were surprised to find out that we would not be doing full-time inspection on these [clean-up] jobs. There just wasn't enough time to permit you to stay with a crew longer than a few minutes at a time, unless there was a problem, because of the number of jobs that each inspector was responsible for. At one time, I had as many as seven jobs, covering approximately 40 miles in one direction. As you can imagine, it was difficult to keep-up with and make entries into that many diaries every day. The workday started at 6:30 a.m. and ended at 5:00 pm, Monday to Saturday.

One of the things I found especially interesting was the rules and regulations of the different parishes (like our counties).

I thank the folks at South Carolina NRCS for allowing me the opportunity to serve on this detail. It was a great experience, and I'd do it again if given the opportunity. It's still going to be a long road back to recovery for this hard hit state, but I was glad to be able to help out.



NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Russell Anderson served an EWP detail to Louisiana for hurricane recovery. Also serving details from NRCS were Steve Anderson, Larry Cantrell, Robbie Newman, Jonathan Todd, and Bobby McQueen.

Meet Our New Employees

Pam Thomas began her career in soils with the Virginia Tech Soil Survey program in the Tidewater area of Virginia mapping Coastal Plain soils from 1987 to 1992. She was transferred to the main campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg in 1992 to serve as coordinator of the soil survey laboratories and to conduct research in soil genesis, mineralogy, and interpretations. In September 2000, Pam joined NRCS as a Soil Scientist in the Virginia State Office with responsibilities for databases, manuscripts, and GIS. Pam was selected as State Soil Scientist for South Carolina NRCS in June 2006.



Pamela Thomas
State Soil
Scientist

A native of West Virginia, she currently co-owns a 180-acre farm with her brother and sister in their home county of Monroe. She received three degrees from Virginia Tech; a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy-Soil Science option (1983), a Master of Science degree in Agronomy (1987), and a doctorate in soil genesis, mineralogy, and interpretations (1998). She is, of course, an avid Hokie fan.

Cory Drennan is a Wildlife Biologist working for SCDNR, in partnership with NRCS, to engage in landscape level planning for priority wildlife species on private agricultural lands. He is stationed out of the Bamberg Field Office and covers a 9-county area in the Sandhills and Coastal Plain eco-regions.



Cory Drennan
NRCS/DNR
Wildlife Biologist

Cory grew up in Perry, GA, and received his B.S.F.R. with an emphasis on Wildlife Management in 2000 from the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forest Resources. While at UGA, he worked at the Whitehall Deer Research Facility and with a variety of research projects across the southeast involving many different wildlife species. Upon graduation, he assisted with field monitoring for Georgia DNR's Bobwhite Quail Initiative and then spent 2 years working on a White-tailed Deer Population Ecology Study on

the Savannah River Site in Aiken and Barnwell Counties. He worked as a Conservation Land Management Apprentice with the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center in Southwest Georgia where he gained significant experience with Longleaf Pine ecosystem restoration and management. In 2004, he went to work with the Alabama Land Trust as a Land and Wildlife Manager responsible for natural resource management on several private properties throughout Alabama and Georgia. Cory and his wife Stephanie currently reside in Aiken.

Crystal Hilton is a native of Manning, SC. After graduating from Manning High School, she attended North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University majoring in Agricultural Education with a concentration in Agricultural Business. Crystal became an intern with USDA-NRCS after completing her second year at NC A&T. She worked in the Clarendon and Williamsburg County field offices. On May 13, 2006, Crystal received her B.S. degree in Agricultural Education from NC A&T. When not in school, she is an intern in the Williamsburg County field office as a Soil Conservationist. She returned to NC A&T this Fall to work on her Master's degree.



Crystal Hilton
Soil
Conservationist
Intern

Farewell Dear Friend

A Tribute to Dwayne Mangum **1958-2006**

*"Sunset Over Charleston,"
photo by Dwayne Mangum, 2004*



PERSONNEL NEWS

New Employees

■ **Angela Major** was selected as a Career Intern- Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, for the Sumter Field Office, effective July 23, 2006.

■ **Michael Sampson** was selected as a Career Intern- Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, for the Kingstree Field Office, effective July 23, 2006.

■ **Kim Williams – McDowell** was selected as the Human Resources Assistant, GS-0203-06, in the State Office, effective June 12, 2006.

Promotions

■ **Pam Thomas**, Soil Scientist, State Office NRCS Virginia, was selected as the State Soil Scientist, GS- 0470-13, for the State Office, effective June 25, 2006

■ **Harvey Campbell**, Soil Conservationist, Reidsville Field Office NRCS North Carolina, was selected as the District Conservationist, GS-0457-12, for the Conway Field Office, effective August 20, 2006.

■ **Antron Williams** was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, in the Ridgeland Field Office, effective September 17, 2006.

■ **Beth M. Truesdale** was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, and reassigned to the Abbeville/McCormick Field Office, effective September 3, 2006.

■ **Daniel Griffin** was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, and reassigned to the Bennettsville Field Office, effective September 3, 2006.

■ **Kristina Jerome** was promoted to District Conservationist, GS-0457-11, in the St. Matthews Field Office, effective June 25, 2006.

■ **Lakeisha Hill** was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, and reassigned to the Lexington Field Office, effective September 3, 2006.

■ **Michael B. Poston** was promoted to Soil Conservation Technician, GS-0458-06, in the Marion Field Office, effective July 9, 2006.

■ **Odessa S. Sirman** completed the Career Enhancement Program and was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-07, and reassigned to Hampton Field Office, effective September 3, 2006.

■ **Shawna M. Shrecengost** was promoted to Soil Conservationist, GS-0457-09, and reassigned to the Walhalla Field Office, effective September 3, 2006.

Reassignments

■ **Sharon Lane**, Administrative Assistant in the state office, was reassigned to National Headquarters, Washington, DC, effective July 9, 2006.

■ **Vera Jackson**, a Financial Assistant in the State Office, was reassigned to Department of Defense, Fort Jackson, effective August 5, 2006.

Conversion to Permanent Employment

■ **Crystal Hilton**, a student in the Kingstree Field Office, was converted from a Student Appointment to a Career Conditional Appointment, GS-0457-05, effective June 25, 2006.

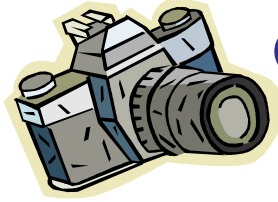
Resignation

■ **Amy Bridges**, District Conservationist, Gaffney Field Office, resigned effective August 19, 2006.

■ **Lawrence Youmans**, Civil Engineering Technician, Walterboro Field Office, resigned effective July 22, 2006.

Retirement

■ **Henry G. Adkins**, State Conservation Engineer, State Office, retired effective July 28, 2006.



Conservation Photo Contest Winners



1st Place:

Justin Rivers, SWCD Technician, Chesterfield



2nd Place:

**TJ Savereno, Wildlife Biologist, Pee Dee
Research and Education Center**



3rd Place:

Lance Brewington, Soil Scientist, York County



Honorable Mention:

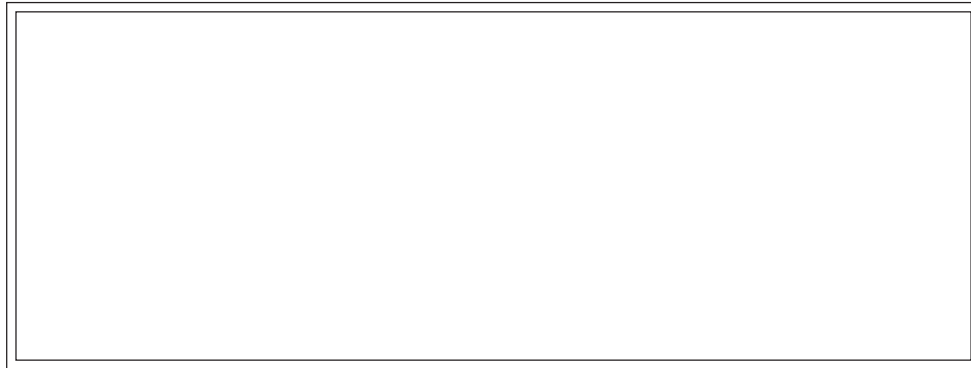
**Pat Turner, Administrative Assistant,
State Office**



Honorable Mention:

**Kathy Hodges, Soil Conservation Technician,
Spartanburg County**

Helping People Help the Land



FIRST CLASS

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
1835 Assembly Street, Room 950
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Visit us on the web at www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS Public Affairs Team

Editor: Amy O. Maxwell, State Public Affairs Specialist

Assistant Editor: Sabrenna Bryant, Public Affairs Assistant

Please send comments and suggestions to:

USDA-NRCS
EDITOR-Current Developments
1835 Assembly Street, Room 950
Columbia, SC 29201 or
amy.maxwell@sc.usda.gov

Current Developments is published quarterly.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.