



South Carolina's Current Developments



Home of the first soil conservation district plan...February 4, 1938

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

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From the Office of the
State Conservationist

Walter W. Douglas



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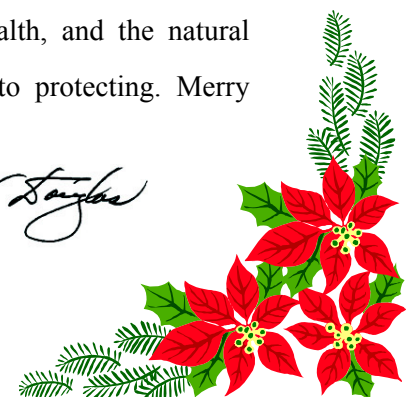


Dear NRCSers:

I hope this edition of South Carolina's *Current Developments* finds you and your family enjoying the holiday season and all the festivities accompanying this special time.

The Conservation Partnership is busy gearing up for the "Working Together for SC's Natural Resources" conference in Charleston, which will take place January 5-8, 2004. The conference kicks off on Monday with the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) symposium, "Water Conservation and Allocation." Featured speakers include hydrologists, a climatologist, and SC Commissioner of Agriculture Charlie Sharpe. The Partnership Conference gets off to a great start on Tuesday with breakout sessions highlighting topics such as the technical service provider (TSP) program in South Carolina, and a session on agricultural districts led by Gerry Cohn, Southeast regional director of the American Farmland Trust. I look forward to seeing you and your families in Charleston for an outstanding conference.

This holiday season, remember to be thankful for all with which we have been blessed—our families, our health, and the natural resources that we have dedicated our lives to protecting. Merry Christmas and a happy 2004.



Notes from the Field

South Lynches Fire Department Goes Above and Beyond the Call of Duty to Save Lives and Property

Department Installs Dry Hydrants with help of RC&D and NRCS

by Sabrenna Bennett, USDA-NRCS

The South Lynches Fire Department in Lake City, South Carolina, has gone the extra mile to ensure safety measures have been taken to protect property and lives throughout their entire district. Through a ten-year partnership with the Santee-Wateree Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), South Lynches Fire Department installed



38 dry hydrants on 35 sites in lower Florence and upper Williamsburg counties. NRCS Soil Technician

left to right: South Lynches Fire Department Administrator John Baker, Chief Samuel Brockington, Jr. and NRCS Soil Technician Russell Anderson.

Russell Anderson was a crucial part of this effort, providing South Lynches with technical assistance during dry hydrant installation. Fire Department Chief Samuel Brockington, Jr. said, "NRCS played a pivotal role in this partnership by ensuring that the dry hydrants were installed properly and able to function even during drought conditions." The result of the hard work of the fire department and partnering agencies culminated in a huge drop in insurance rates for local residents.

Outstanding teamwork also made South Lynches the most successful and efficient fire department for a non-hydranted rural area in South Carolina,

according to the Insurance Services Office (ISO), Inc. The ISO is a private agency that evaluates communities' firefighting capabilities. Many insurance companies use these ratings to determine the insurance premiums to charge property owners. The classification considers the fire department's capabilities, available water for fire fighting and the ability to quickly and accurately dispatch the closest fire stations. South Lynches Fire Department Administrator John Baker said, "The best rating is "1" and the worst is "10." In general the lower the rating, the lower the insurance premium."

Before the installation of dry hydrants, South Lynches ISO rating was a six. However, the success of the dry hydrant installation resulted in bringing the ISO rating down to a four—the lowest ISO rating for a non-hydranted rural area in South Carolina. "Because of the dry hydrant installation, homeowners saw a 60% reduction in their homeowners insurance," said Baker. "What's even more important is the protection and lifesaving ability that dry hydrants offer." With a steady, non-pressurized water supply available to use without electricity to pump, dry hydrants provide an essential resource in times of fire, or other natural disasters such as hurricanes, etc.

"What's perhaps most impressive about the South Lynches Fire Department is their ability to think about the big picture by covering the entire fire district with dry hydrants to ensure the best fire protection for their citizens," explained Florence NRCS District Conservationist Lynette Savereno. "They certainly went beyond the call of duty and carried on this project even after RC&D funding had come to an end."

The installation of dry hydrants in the district began in 1993, when the Santee-Wateree RC&D donated the materials for the project. However, when RC&D funds ran out, the South Lynches Fire Department decided to continue installing dry hydrants throughout their district in an effort to maximize fire control and minimize fire damage, with each dry hydrant averaging \$1,200. This cost includes the hydrant head, piping, strainers, and other materials as well as the cost of the equipment to dig the trench. It also includes the cost of signage, which is essential in ensuring the hydrant is easily identifiable during times of emergency.

"Because of the dry hydrant installation, homeowners saw a 60% reduction in their homeowners insurance."

South Lynches Fire Department Administrator John Baker

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South Lynches was able to reach the low ISO rating by installing a dry hydrant connected to a water source within one to one and a half miles of all property throughout the community. "The water is accessible 24 hours a day, every day, and even during natural disasters because it is non-pressurized and does not require electricity to pump," explained Chief Brockington.

Anderson explained that the dry hydrant consist of either 6 or 8-inch PVC pipe with one end placed beneath the water and the other end two feet above ground, which easily hooks to fire trucks to pump the water. "The reason dry hy-



All the dry hydrants were clearly marked for easy identification during an emergency.

drants are so important in rural areas, such as the South Lynches district, is because fires often get out of control when fire trucks leave the scene to refill water tanks back at the fire station." By having dry hydrants conveniently located in nearby ponds, lakes, and streams, the fire department saves time in travel and has a steady, reliable water source. "Through our partnership with the fire district and the community, NRCS aided the South Lynches Fire Department in achieving their safety goals, but they certainly didn't stop when the funding run out," emphasized Anderson. "They were truly dedicated to making a difference in their district by protecting lives and property with the dry hydrant project."

For more information, contact the Florence NRCS office at (843) 669-9686, ext. 114, or the South Lynches Fire Department at (843) 374-8690.

SC Pipeline Joins Conservation Effort to Enhance Wildlife Habitat

SCANA subsidiary South Carolina Pipeline Corporation (SCPC) announced that they will become partners in South Carolina's P.O.W.E.R. (Protecting Our Wildlife at Every Right-of-Way) for Wildlife program. SCE&G, a separate subsidiary of SCANA, has been a member of the program since 1999.

SCPC representative Mac Semple said, "This partnership is a natural fit for our company. We're committed to being good neighbors and operating with respect for the environment. The P.O.W.E.R. program

will allow us a great opportunity to work with landowners to provide additional habitat for wildlife for years to come." SCPC is a Columbia based natural gas transmission company with almost 2,000 miles of pipeline within approximately 1,600 miles of right-of-way.

P.O.W.E.R. for Wildlife is a rights-of-way management campaign designed to create wildlife habitat beneath electrical transmission lines. It is a statewide partnership sponsored by the South Carolina Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils, electric power companies, electric cooperatives, and pipeline companies. The project works by offering cash grants and professional wildlife management advice to groups and individuals committed to five years of rights-of-way management.

Landowners, hunting clubs, wildlife organizations, and other individuals committed to the conversion and management of rights-of-way in South Carolina may apply for a grant. Individuals receiving grants must have control of, and manage, the approved acreage for a 5-year minimum period as outlined by their customized plans prepared with local NRCS, SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) or other wildlife organization staffs.

Since the inception of the program in 1999, over 2,000 acres of wildlife habitat along electrical transmission lines have been created or improved.

"Many wildlife species such as turkey, deer, and especially quail are benefiting from wildlife plantings along these transmission lines, and the electric companies, pipeline companies, and cooperatives have been excellent conser-



Paul Price, SCPC right-of-way maintenance supervisor (l) and SCPC representative Mac Semple visited a potential P.O.W.E.R. for Wildlife site.

vation partners throughout the process," said USDA-NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas.

If you own or lease eligible lands and would like to participate in this program, contact your local NRCS or SWCD office located in each county.

Applications must be received by Jan. 31, 2004.

South Carolina's Fort Jackson and USDA-NRCS Achieve Conservation Success

by Amy O. Maxwell, public affairs specialist, USDA-NRCS

Partnership Equals Exemplary Conservation Success

Partnership is often the key to getting work done—especially twelve years of successful conservation work. This is the case at South Carolina's Fort Jackson, the nation's largest U.S. Army Training Center. A leader in the conservation of natural resources, Fort Jackson has

a close working relationship with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This partnership has culminated



in an outstanding and exemplary total resource management plan that has been recognized over the years with national and regional awards. Most recently, NRCS presented Fort Jackson's Garrison Commander with a Conservation Achievement Award for efforts to prevent and heal erosion on training grounds, as well as improve forestry resources and wildlife habitat. The working agreement began in 1991, and resulted in rehabilitation of over 100 eroded sites, improvement of nearly 5,300 acres of Red-cockaded Woodpecker habitat, and planting of nearly 7,500 acres of longleaf pine.

Identifying Resource Needs at Fort Jackson

The landscape at the fort is characterized by sandy soils that present challenges. With continuous use by troops, vegetation wears thin, and storm water runoff shifts, causing the soil to become unstable. Dry soils such as these make it extremely difficult to keep ground cover in place, therefore creating severe erosion. Runoff concentrated and formed dangerous gullies in large bare areas, causing constant erosion. The erosion then caused sedimentation, a non-point source pollutant, that effects water quality in streams and damages wetland habitat. This is why the agreement between Fort Jackson and NRCS was critical to addressing the problem before it was too late.

Furthermore, the need for restoration of the Longleaf Pine ecosystem was identified, which promises an improved training environment for the troops, as well as an ideal habitat for the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker and other indigenous plants and animals.

Combating the Erosion Problem

An Interagency Agreement between Fort Jackson and NRCS was signed in 1991. First, the plan involved a survey of erosion problems and then conservation designs. NRCS provided engineering, agronomic, and contracting expertise. NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Ricky Walker is stationed at Fort Jackson and inspects and supervises the project work. He explained that erosion control involves developing best management practices, or BMP's, to control runoff and keep cover on the ground. "We use a number of techniques and practices to control erosion, including new technology such as erosion control blankets, which have evolved erosion control into a science." The project began with a resource inventory that identified 87 sites with significant erosion or water quality problems. As of 2003, an additional 60 sites have been identified. So far, NRCS has completed 22 erosion control contracts, in which over 100 sites have been rehabilitated. This means that 250 acres were seeded to permanent vegetation, 5 miles of water diversions were installed as well as 10 miles of vegetated waterways. Materials used include 6,000 tons of rip-rap, 30,000 tons of crushed granite, and 100,000 square yards of erosion control blankets! The benefits of all this work include not only improved training grounds for the troops, but also improved water quality. Fort Jackson concluded that NRCS assistance resulted in a 98% reduction of erosion on treated sites since 1992. Areas that were once scarred with erosion are now lush green vegetation.

It was also concluded that each dollar spent on design by NRCS achieved significantly more construction value than would the same dollar spent on designs by a private firm. "In addition to making training areas safer, the rehabilitation project also helps prevent the transportation of sediment and pollutants into streams and wetlands," added Walker. Ken Burghardt, chief of the Ft. Jackson Environmental and Natural Resource Division said, "With NRCS providing a turn-key operation, Fort Jackson received professional services in a cost-effective manner. NRCS provided technical services including planning, engineering, contracting, inspection, and certification to ensure quality results."

Forestry Improvement Leads to Improved Wildlife Habitat

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker population at Fort Jackson was in danger. The problem was a limited amount of suitable habitat that the birds needed for nesting and foraging. In order to improve the habitat,

NRCS and the U.S. Forest Service assisted by implementing conservation measures including prescribed burning and chemical and mechanical hardwood control. Through the Longleaf Pine Restoration program, competing vegetation was removed within specified areas in order to open up the forest and provide room for larger trees to thrive. The area was first inventoried so that prime habitat areas could be identified. This year alone, approximately 1,560 acres have been enhanced to provide improved habitat for the endangered woodpeckers. In total, more than 17,000 acres at Fort Jackson have been improved to provide suitable wildlife habitat. The results have contributed to the doubling of Fort Jackson's Red-cockaded Woodpecker population from 1996-2002.

Total Resource Management Gets Noticed at Fort Jackson

Last month, NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas presented Fort Jackson Garrison Commander Colonel Brent Johnson, and Ken Burghardt with an award for outstanding conservation achievement. "Fort Jackson has illustrated a strong conservation ethic through their dedication of staff, resources, and energy to protecting natural resources for both their troops safety and for the improvement of soil, water, forestry, and wildlife resources," said Douglas.



NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas (r) presented Fort Jackson Garrison Commander Colonel Brent Johnson with an award for outstanding conservation achievement.

Ninety-Six District RC&D Donates Seeds to Laurens and Saluda County Schools

by Sabrenna Bennett, Public Affairs Assistant

In an effort to create a colorful outdoor learning environment for primary, elementary and middle school students, the Park Seed Company of Greenwood, Clemson University, Joe Adair Outdoor Educational Center and the Laurens Recreational Center donated wildflower seeds, native grass seeds, and park benches made of recycled plastic to the Ninety-Six Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council. These materials were then distributed to Laurens Middle School in Greenwood and to the Saluda County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for use in Saluda County schools.

Former Acting Ninety-Six RC&D Coordinator Reginald Hall and Ninety-Six RC&D Chairman Brenda Galloway received 50 lbs. of wildflower and native grass seeds from the Park Seed Company. The wildflower seeds are a mixture of various plants, including sunflower, marigold, zinnia, evening primrose, lemon mint, switchgrass, and black-eyed Susan, and have a retail value of \$5,000. Most of the flowers are perennials, meaning they will reseed and grow each year. Clemson University, Joe Adair Outdoor Educational Center and the Laurens Recreational Center also donated a total of four park benches.



Former Acting Ninety-Six RC&D coordinator Reginald Hall (l) and Brenda Galloway, chairperson of the Ninety-Six District RC&D Council, received 50 pounds of wildflower and native seeds from the Park Seed Company.

The wildflower and native grass seeds will be planted on school grounds, along with the placement of the benches, and will be maintained by three master gardeners at Laurens Middle School. "While these seeds will provide the students of both counties with hands-on experience in environmental education, they will also aid in erosion control and the beautification of a sediment basin at Saluda County schools," stated Hugh Smith, NRCS district conservationist for Saluda County.

Official presentations were held to present

both Laurens and Saluda Counties with the materials needed for this project.

For more information, please contact the Ninety Six District RC&D office at (864) 229-2174.



NRCS District Conservationist Hugh Smith (3rd from left) presented seeds to Laurens Middle School where three master gardeners will maintain the plantings.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Easement Celebrated in Beaufort County

by Amy O. Maxwell, USDA-NRCS

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) received special attention in Beaufort, SC, at a ceremony at the Penn Center on November 8, 2003. The Penn Center is one of the nation's most historically significant African-American educational and cultural institutions. It was established early in the Civil War, before emancipation. The purpose was to educate the freed slaves on the sea islands around Port Royal Sound that had been occupied by the Union on November 7th, 1861. Since then, the Penn Center has worked on many community-based projects, such as bringing public water to the islands, helping farmers to buy and market cooperatives and advocating better housing and health care for low income residents.

The center received USDA funding to protect 195 forested acres from development. NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas spoke at the ceremony, which was attended by nearly 10,000 spectators. "This is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture by providing matching funds to places like the Penn Center with existing farmland," he explained.

The Penn Center has agreed not to convert the 195 acres covered under the easement to nonagricultural uses and a conservation plan will be developed for the farm at the Penn Center that will protect soil and water resources. This easement is permanent, which means that the acreage will forever be protected. What is so remarkable about the Penn Center is that the landscape is virtually unchanged since the island was occupied in 1861. In a time of rapid industrial growth and expansion, South Carolina's farmland is quickly disappearing. The farm being protected here is also located in one of the most rapidly developing counties in the nation, due to nearby Hilton Head Island and Beaufort.

Today, the Penn Center agricultural acreage is



NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas discussed the FRPP easement which will protect 195 acres of land at the Penn Center from development.

used for teaching modern methods of economical land use for local landowners in the areas of cropland, pastureland, and forest products. During his presentation, Douglas thanked the partnership that helped make the project become a reality. "Because of the strong conservation ethic of the local Beaufort County Council, and the staff here at the Penn Center, prime farmland will be permanently protected for generations to come."

Spartanburg Town Celebrates End of Gully Problems

by Amy O. Maxwell, USDA-NRCS

The town of Wellford, South Carolina, in

Spartanburg County was a small speck on the map with a huge problem. With a population of just over 2,000 residents, Mayor Sally Peake was very concerned about the safety of the



Ridge Road before treatment.

residents. She contacted NRCS and the local district for assistance with a dangerous gully. Located on the narrow Ridge Road, a highly traveled asphalt road, the gully posed an imminent threat to life and property. Ridge Road is also a major route for school buses going to the local elementary school. Furthermore, the impact went beyond that of the nearby homes and travelers along Ridge Road. Water quality was also greatly impaired in the North Tyger Reservoir, just a few miles downstream of the gully. The 300-foot gully, which measured 20-foot deep and 25-foot wide was two feet off the edge of the paved road. When NRCS



Ridge Road after filling in the gully.

engineers visited the site, they declared it a serious hazard to local residents.

“When we first visited the site, we realized how serious the problem was, and that something had to be done immediately to protect local citizens and safeguard the nearby Tyger River from sediment pollution,” stated Foothills RC&D Coordinator Dave Demarest.

The first step in the process involved an active campaign to raise money to fund the project. Funding was secured from four sources including the City of Wellford, Spartanburg County Transportation Committee, State Representative Joe Mahaffey, and the Startex-Jackson-Wellford-Duncan (SJWD) Water District totaling \$75,000.

Construction began on October 25, 2003. NRCS Civil Engineering Technician Wayne Henderson said, “Fifty-two dump truck loads of debris were taken from the gully.” Also, over 3,000 cubic yards of red clay were used to fill in the gully. Kathy Hodges, NRCS soil conservation technician

was also a major player in the construction and inspection end of the project, and NRCS Field Engineer Scott Glenn designed the structures that alleviated the problem. Spartanburg NRCS Dis-



left to right: Joel Gregory-Wellford police chief; Sally Peake-Wellford Mayor, Glenn Breed-Asst. Administrator of Spartanburg County; Bryan Johnson-SJWD; Wayne Henderson-USDA-NRCS; Joe Mahaffey-State Representative; and Mike Frost-SJWD.

trict Conservationist Charles Banks said the project is a great asset to the Wellford community. “This is a great advancement for Wellford and its citizens because they can now rest easily knowing that their property and lives are protected,” said Banks. Construction was completed on November 4th and project partners and local citizens celebrated the accomplishment on November 21st with a ceremony.

Partners involved in the project included Spartanburg SWCD, NRCS, Foothills RC&D Council, City of Wellford, Spartanburg County, and State Representative Joe Mahaffey.

2003 Farm-City Week Celebrated in Richland County with Omelets, Celebrity Chefs

Most Americans, both farm and city dwellers, are blessed with an abundance of wholesome food and healthy living spaces, but not everyone. It’s in everyone’s best interest for our farms and cities to remain strong and viable. Neither farm nor city can exist in isolation. They need each other.

National Farm-City Week is always the week ending on Thanksgiving Day, and is a time to reflect on our blessings, pledge to help those in need, and correct wrongs wherever they exist in our rural, suburban and urban communities. The week culminates in a celebration, which was enjoyed by over 200 attendees this year in Richland County.

The 2003 Richland County Farm-City Committee Chair was Jim Wilson, district conservationist, USDA-NRCS. Wilson organized the November 20th celebration held at Seawells and attended by students, teachers, agency officials, and private landowners. One highlight of the event was the lunch, consisting of



Celebrity chefs from local radio and television stations proved that they can cook a good omelet!

delicious omelets cooked by celebrity chefs! The chefs included local media personalities such as WIS’ Susan Aude-Fisher and Joe Pinner, and WOMG’s Woody Windham, just to name a few.

The Richland County Farm-City educational program consists of various contests including bulletin board creation, essay writing, lunchroom decoration, and a photo contest.

This year’s community winners were Adluh Flour and Kirkman Finley (a grain farmer in Richland County). They were recognized at the luncheon for their outstanding support of the farm-city concept and their dedication to protecting natural resources.

Four Holes Swamp Area Gets Boost from Wetland Reserve Program

by Amy O. Maxwell, USDA-NRCS, Public Affairs Specialist

On October 22, 2003, the Orangeburg NRCS office in South Carolina hosted a Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) information session for landowners in the Four Holes Swamp Area. The meeting was organized in an effort to inform WRP applicants about the program and what to expect during the application and survey process.

The project is unique in that there are presently five WRP contracts within the Four Holes Swamp area comprising over 2,400 acres that will be restored. This means that the natural resource benefits to the area will be far reaching with this large amount of protected acreage. The area is a swamp-stream system fed largely by springs and runoff from surrounding higher areas.

NRCS Soil Conservationist Charles Holland has worked extensively with the Four Holes Swamp WRP landowners and organized the meeting. "I think it's great that these landowners are coming together to make such a huge impact on water quality and wildlife habitat diversity." The major goal of WRP is to restore native wetlands and also to establish a diverse habitat with shallow water areas for wildlife. "This then leads to a diversified plant community and eventually a diverse wildlife population," explained NRCS Wildlife Biologist Jim Lewis. "The natural flow of this floodplain area was interrupted by logging operations, which fragmented the area, and WRP will open up the area to allow water to flow again," he concluded. By opening the area back up, a healthy flow of nutrients will return to reconnect the floodplain with the surrounding river system. Lewis also discussed using native seeds for a wildlife food source to reestablish native wildlife species.

WRP participant William Bookhart of Elloree, SC, talked to the group about his positive experience with the program. "It's been interesting to watch the comeback of shorebirds, wood ducks, egrets, herons, and other shallow-water wading birds. He also said that natural vegetation was making a resurgence on his 17-acre site which was diked to restore the natural hydrology which once existed. "It's obvious the wildlife prefer the native vegetation that is coming back because I am seeing a large increase in species that had previously disappeared."

NRCS Program Specialist Glenn Sandifer

was also present at the meeting to detail program guidelines and requirements and the landowners were able to ask questions. "I think the meeting was successful in informing these landowners what to expect with WRP, and it also made them realize the overall impact of their conservation efforts,"

said Sandifer. "When you get this many landowners in one area who are willing to put their land into a conservation easement for soil and water improvement, you know the impacts will really make a difference in the health of the entire watershed," added Holland.

For more information, contact NRCS at (803) 534-2409, ext. 122.



Frank Stephens, Orangeburg NRCS district conservationist, addressed a group of landowners regarding WRP in the Four Holes Swamp.

A symposium for developers, engineers, landowners, and others interested in wetland regulations and conservation options and incentives.

sponsored by the SC Soil and Water Conservation Society

The Wealth in SC's Wetlands

**February 17, 2004
Columbia, SC**

In cooperation with NRCS, Corps of Engineers, SCDNR, and SCDHEC.

For additional info. contact Jim Wilson, NRCS Urban Conservationist, at (803) 576-2084.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources- Land, Water, and Conservation Division
and South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts



Conservation Partnership News



New Wee Tee State Forest Dedicated On Santee River

The S.C. Forestry Commission and SCDNR along with other partners have protected significant acreage on the Santee River to be known as the Wee Tee State Forest and will manage it for a variety of public uses. The new state forest was announced during a dedication ceremony November 18 near the property.

The Wee Tee property, acquired with the assistance of The Conservation Fund, is titled to the S.C. Forestry Commission and will be managed as a working forest. The S.C. Forestry Commission and SCDNR are working cooperatively to develop a management plan for the property, and the lands will be included in the SCDNR Wildlife Management Area Program.



The Wee Tee State Forest on the Santee River. Photo by Charles Slate/The Sun News

The 12,439-acre Wee Tee State Forest, located along the Santee River in Williamsburg and Georgetown counties, contains more than 12 miles of river frontage. It lies directly across the river from Francis Marion National Forest. In addition to the river frontage, the property also includes a 200-acre-plus lake and numerous natural, seasonally flooded ponds and oxbows.

Of the 12,439 acres, approximately 780 acres are in upland hardwood and pine with the remaining 11,660 acres in bottomland hardwood and coastal floodplain habitats. Limited use of the new Wee Tee State Forest will begin after January 1, 2004. A schedule for hunting and other uses is being developed.

Farm Bill Conservation Program Workshops Scheduled for February

The South Carolina Wildlife Federation and SCDNR are teaming up with USDA to reach out to private landowners through a series of workshops on conservation programs in the 2002 Farm Bill.

The workshops, funded by the South Carolina Farm Bureau, are from 6:30–8 p.m. at the following locations and times:

Feb. 10, 2004 - Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, 3250 St. Matthews Road, NE (Highway 601), Orangeburg

Feb. 12, 2004 - Pee Dee Research and Education Center, 2200 Pocket Road, Florence

Feb. 17, 2004 - F.E. DuBose Career Center of Central Carolina Technical College, 3351 Sumter Highway (Hwy 521) in Manning

Judy Barnes, Certified Wildlife Biologist and Farm Bill/Ag Liaison, Small Game Project, SCDNR, will be presenting an overview of the vast array of conservation programs that benefit wildlife while providing substantial income supplements. Private landowners and land managers are encouraged to attend and learn how they can voluntarily retire marginal cropland to create wildlife habitat, install innovative conservation practices and gain financially for their efforts.

Representatives from USDA-NRCS and the Farm Service Agency will be on hand to answer questions.

For more information, contact Angela Viney with the South Carolina Wildlife Federation in Columbia at (803) 256-0670, angela@scwf.org; or Judy Barnes with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources in Columbia at (803) 734-4306, jbarnes@scdnr.state.sc.us.

Williamsburg SWCD Commissioner Retires After 22.5 Years of Faithful Service

Richard Gamble, the former Vice-Chairman of the Williamsburg SWCD, retired after 22.5 years of faithful service. Gamble, a native of the Indiantown Community of Williamsburg County, is a retired farmer hailing from a long line of family farmers before him.

Gamble says that he farmed because he loved it and his father made it possible for him to farm. At his peak, Gamble farmed about 700 acres consisting of cotton, corn, soybean and some small grains. He also raised hogs and cows.

As a commissioner, he said what he really enjoyed most was talking with the local farmers and watching the farming community change progressively. "I liked talking with and assisting small farmers who may not have been able to make quick adjustments as farming times changed."

Juana Gamble, his wife of 52 years, describes Gamble as a true conservationist. "He has always operated his farm looking out for the next generation. He wants to leave the property in the best condition possible for the future generations."

Gamble is happiest on his tractor. His hobbies include gardening and reading. All of their vegetables are home grown. Mr. Gamble has two children and four

grandchildren. He continues to be a very active part of his church and community.

His presence will be missed by the conservation district, but his love and commitment to conservation and the people of Williamsburg County will continue even during his retirement.



Von Snelgrove (l), conservation districts chief, presents Richard Gamble, former Williamsburg SWCD commissioner, with a plaque for 22.5 years of service.

South Carolina District Employees Serve on National Board

Congratulations to Anderson SWCD Administrative Assistant Ann Spake who was elected President-Elect of the Southeast Conservation District Employee Association in Tennessee last month. Spake previously held the office of Southeast Conservation District Employee Association treasurer for the past four years. She will hold the term for three years and automatically succeed to the office of President in the event of a vacancy in that position. Spake is currently the Vice-President for the South Carolina Conservation District Employees Association (SCCDEA) and in January will assume the office of SCCDEA President.

Orangeburg SWCD Manager Glenda Lewis also holds offices on state and national district boards. She will assume the role of SCCDEA Vice-President in January and will accept the position of Secretary for the National Conservation Districts Employee Association.

Congratulations to these South Carolina district employees who are making a national impact on the future of district employees!



Orangeburg SWCD Manager Glenda Lewis (l), look on as Anderson SWCD Administrative Assistant Ann Spake addresses the Southeast Conservation District Employee Association in Tennessee. Both were elected to serve as board members for the National Conservation Districts Employee Association.

Remembering Keith Cain

Keith Cain, former East-Piedmont RC&D coordinator, passed away on October 30, 2003. Keith began work with the Soil Conservation Service in May 1970 as a student trainee. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Ag. Education from Clemson University in 1972 and was converted to a soil conservationist working in Pickens County. He also worked in the Manning office, advancing to district conservationist in 1976. Finally, Keith was transferred to the Winnsboro field office, where he remained for his entire career.



Sterling Sadler, Florence SWCD manager, remembers Keith:

“One of my favorite experiences with “the Dean” was during a talk we planned at a literary club here in Florence. We decided to show the old “Journey” slide show, which consisted of about 10 slide projectors, 200 dissolve units, and no directions! Second stupid move on our part was that we didn’t eat lunch before the presentation! Murphy’s law kicked in and of course, the slide show didn’t work. So, Keith looks at me and says, “And now Mrs. Sadler will make her presentation.” Somehow we got through it, and the club gave us a chocolate pie in appreciation for our efforts. Keith and I ate the WHOLE pie sitting in the truck! I loved Keith and he will always stand in the ranks of one of the best district conservationist I ever had the pleasure of working with.”



Larry Nates, East Piedmont RC&D Chairman remembers Keith:

“Keith and I had a professional relationship through the RC&D Council, but also enjoyed a true and genuine personal friendship. Keith’s exceptional organizational and planning skills enabled him to create a plan of action that always resulted in a very workable and effective conservation project. I am most grateful for having known Keith and value the friendship we shared.”



Dwayne Mangum, Charleston NRCS district conservationist, remembers Keith:

“One of my fondest memories of Keith is from December 1990, when I was a district conservationist in the Winnsboro office. My daughters were 2 and 6 years of age, and my oldest daughter was beginning to have doubts about the believability of dear old Santa Claus. My wife and I had just purchased a video camera and had learned some neat tricks, including one where we could make it look like someone was disappearing if we held the camera just right. This is where Keith saved the day. He volunteered



to dress up like Santa and did an outstanding acting job as he strutted around putting out presents with his deep, “ho, ho, ho!” He laid his finger aside his nose, I did my video camera magic, and sure enough, it looked just like Keith rose up the chimney! On Christmas morning, we showed the video to the kids, who no longer had any doubt that Santa really existed! I have so many memories of Keith and feel blessed to have worked with him.”



Dennis DeFrancesco, Greenville Resource Soil Scientist remembers Keith:

“Keith—he was always there when you needed anything. That could be work-related advice, or one of his well placed jibes to keep things in perspective. He was always good natured. Always. You could depend on him. Always. How many people can you truly say that about? And he was smart, too. Loved his job. He knew how to get the job done and have fun doing it. What a wonderful combination. We are all better off having known Keith, and that is an understatement. I’m still sad at his passing, but I know that Keith would have some clever response to that, too. I just wish I could hear him say it one more time.”

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Remembering Keith Cain cont...



Pat Ingle, Fairfield County Administrative Assistant, remembers Keith:

“Keith was truly one of a kind. He was very dedicated to his job and demanded perfection. He taught me how to accept constructive criticism gracefully and to forgive those who could not read and follow instructions. ☺ Keith enjoyed life and lived it to the fullest. I am a better person for having known and worked with him all those years. He was a dear friend and I miss him very much, but for the life lessons he taught me, I will be forever grateful.”



Doug Deaderick, Lexington and Calhoun district conservationist, remembers Keith:

“Keith was a professional—he always did the complete job with utmost integrity.

Keith was a leader—the kind that gives ideas to people, steps aside, and lets them run with them.

Keith was a superb facilitator—he helped me through several tough meetings.

Keith was a great friend—we shared many laughs, too many to number. He really made work fun!”



Steve Edwards, Lowcountry RC&D coordinator, remembers Keith:

“Keith Cain was a great mentor! He took many people under his wing and in his own jovial way, he helped them along. He was truly our “Dean,” keeping us out of trouble and providing constant encouragement. He will be greatly missed.”



Maryann Trent, York district conservationist, remembers Keith:

“In my work with the Catawba Indians, Keith assisted me on several occasions. He was always interested in what was going on with them and learning more about their culture. He started calling me “Chief” whenever we spoke on the phone or saw each other. I can hear him saying it now—I will miss that.”



Sandy Cook, former NRCS State Office Administrative Assistant, remembers Keith:

“Keith Cain is one of the special people you meet during your career. He was a kind, knowledgeable, and funny man who I grew to love. He helped me in so many ways during my time with RC&D and NRCS. We shared many funny experiences and laughs. He took me out into the field and showed me the work that our agency did, making it easier for me to understand what RC&D coordinators did on a day to day basis. I can say this about Keith too: he is the one person who could out eat me when it came to pizza! We enjoyed pizza eating contests. ☺ I miss Keith, but feel blessed to have known him and am proud to have had him in my life. Keith, if you are looking down on me, I still love pizza and am trying to keep up our tradition!”



Walt Douglas, state conservationist, remembers Keith:

“Keith was a dedicated conservationist and served South Carolina in a most professional manner. He made an impact on our state's soil and water resources that will be felt by future generations. He was a wonderful asset to our agency and will be greatly missed.”



Keith worked hard to make constructed wetlands a reality in South Carolina.



Keith, we will miss you, but will never forget you!