

Summer
2018



Catawba Trail Elementary
School Garden

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Equipment for Rent

The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has two farm implements available for farmers to rent for use in Richland County and the [Twenty-five Mile Creek Watershed](#).

The first piece of equipment is an 8' I&J roller crimper—a heavy rolling drum which attaches to a tractor and is used to flatten and kill cover crops. Using this roller crimper allows farmers to reduce their herbicide use while growing cover crops that improve soil health and fertility, reduce erosion, and protect water quality.

The second piece of equipment is an 8' Truax no-till drill with three seed boxes. No-till drills allow farmers, pasture managers, and those interested in planting wildlife food plots to plant their crops without first tilling the soil. This method of soil management reduces erosion, encourages soil health, and protects water quality.



Use of the Richland SWCD's equipment requires access to a tractor with a minimum of 50 hp and remote hydraulics, and renters are responsible for equipment transport and use. Additional guidelines are available online at www.richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd. Contact 803-576-2080 for more information.

Educational Kits Available to Teachers

Richland County educators may borrow educational materials including a [Soil Slake Kit](#), [Rainfall Simulator](#) (pictured at right), [Adopt-A-Stream Kit](#), [Vermicomposting Kit](#), and [Enviroscape Model](#) for classroom use. Equipment may be borrowed for a one-week period, and the borrower is responsible for pick-up and return of items. Visit richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd for more information about each kit.



FY2018: By the Numbers

In FY2018 (July 1, 2017—June 30, 2018), the Richland SWCD provided:

- 6 workshops and events for
- 409 farmers and natural resource professionals
- 23 workshops and events for
- 430 teachers and environmental educators
- 71 class presentations at
- 26 schools reaching
- 1,757 students
- 20 school consultations
- \$5,000 in Conservation Education Mini-Grant and Clean Stream Columbia Award funding to support environmental projects at
- 8 Richland County schools
- 1 \$1,000 Youth Scholarship
- 51 youth awards in Arbor Day and Conservation Poster Contests
- 2 SC Envirothon Team sponsorships
- Awards for Richland County Conservation Teacher of the Year, Principal of the Year, Cooperator of the Year, and Volunteer of the Year
- Funding and technical guidance for five septic repairs and several livestock Best Management Practice installments in the Twenty-five Mile Creek Watershed



Photo Captions

Top: Students at Catawba Trail Elementary School (CTES) harvested carrots from their school garden during an end-of-year garden workday. CTES is a Green Steps School mentored by the Richland SWCD, and several Conservation Education Mini-Grants have supported on-campus conservation projects. **Center:** Indya Woodfolk, a senior at Hammond School, was the recipient of a \$1,000 Youth Conservation Scholarship. Woodfolk plans to attend Catawba College in the fall and will pursue a career in environmental policy. **Bottom:** Students at Longleaf Middle School used Conservation Education Mini-Grant funding to create pollinator habitat and reduce stormwater runoff on their campus.

Education Programs Available for Fall 2018!



Conservation Poster Contest

The National Conservation Poster Contest, sponsored annually by the National Association of Conservation Districts, raises awareness about soil and water conservation issues through youth outreach. The Contest is open to public, private, and home-schooled students in grades K through 12. The 2019 theme is "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper," and Richland County entries are due by April 12, 2019. Rules and entry forms are available at richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd.



Mini-Grant Funding

Faculty and staff members of public, private, and alternative schools in Richland County are eligible to apply for grants in the amounts of \$500 or \$1,000 to support campus conservation projects and youth environmental education initiatives through the Conservation Education Mini-Grant Program. Two award cycles are available: applications received by September 28, 2018 will be considered for fall 2018 funding; applications received by February 1, 2019 will be considered for spring 2019 funding. Project work and the expenditure of funds must be completed by June 15, 2019. Applications and guidelines are available at richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd.

Class Presentations

Richland SWCD offers a limited number of class presentations for Richland County students on a variety of conservation topics. Visit richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd for details on available programs and guidelines. A list of other guest presenters for school and community groups, and a list of conservation-themed field trip opportunities in Richland County, are also [available online](#).



Environmental Educator and Teacher Trainings

[Project Learning Tree \(PLT\)](#) and [Project WET \(Water Education for Teachers\)](#) are award-winning international environmental education curricula designed for teachers and informal educators who work with students from early childhood through high school. Richland SWCD facilitates PLT and Project WET educator trainings in Richland County; to request a training for a group of teachers or informal educators, contact Chanda Cooper at cooper.chanda@richlandcountysc.gov. You may also visit the [SC PLT](#) and [SC Project WET](#) websites for more information.



FY18 Event Highlights



Conservation Partnership Field Day

In March, the Richland SWCD partnered with the Kershaw SWCD, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Clemson University, University of South Carolina, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, SC Department of Agriculture, and private sponsors to host a Conservation Partnership Field Day at Cooper Family Farms in Bishopville, SC. Approximately 90 people attended the event to learn about high tunnel construction and management, soil health, irrigation, and pollinator habitat.



Midlands Master Naturalists

Richland SWCD led an “Observing Nature” course for 2018 Midlands Master Naturalist (MMN) participants. MMN is part of a statewide Master Naturalist Program coordinated by Clemson University. The mission of the program is to create a corps of citizen volunteers trained in the fundamentals of natural history, nature interpretation, and the interface of humans and nature in order to empower them to contribute their time and talents to responsible, science-based environmental stewardship. The Midlands course is hosted by the SC Wildlife Federation and taught by experts in the fields of natural history, botany, biology, forestry, and geology.



Project Learning Tree—Early Childhood Curriculum

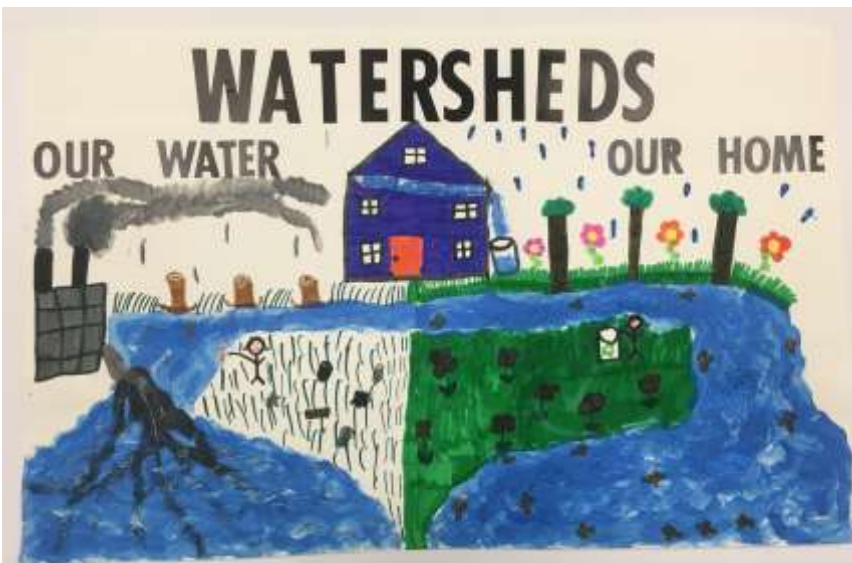
Project Learning Tree (PLT) is an environmental education curriculum with modules designed for use with students in grades preK through high school. Activities are designed to be hands-on, interactive, engaging, and fun while aligned with state and national education standards. This spring, Richland SWCD hosted a PLT Early Childhood Curriculum Workshop at Horrell Hill Elementary School. The event was attended by 18 pre-service teachers from the University of South Carolina and four facilitators.



SC Farmer Resource Rodeo

Richland SWCD co-coordinated the third annual SC Farmer Resource Rodeo on behalf of the Midlands Local Food Collaborative, the SC New and Beginning Farmer Program, and a number of sponsors and partner organizations. More than two dozen agencies and organizations participated in the event, reaching an audience of 107 farmers and farm resource providers. The 2019 SC Farmer Resource Rodeo will be held on Thursday, February 7; watch richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd for registration details!

Watershed Poster Contest Winners on Display



Emerson Jane Edwards, 3rd Place, 2nd-3rd Grades
Catawba Trail Elementary School

Grade, Catawba Trail Elementary School

4th-6th Grades:

- **First Place:** Ella Catherine Gillam, 5th Grade, Catawba Trail Elementary School
- **Second Place:** Ethan Carl Outlaw, 4th Grade, Catawba Trail Elementary School
- **Third Place:** Sherlyn Sanchez Romero, 5th Grade, Catawba Trail Elementary School
- **Honorable Mention:** Lily Margaret Shelton, 5th Grade, Catawba Trail Elementary School
- **Honorable Mention:** Raymond Moses, 5th Grade, Joseph Keels Elementary School

7th-9th Grades:

- **First Place:** David Donald Vandelay, 7th Grade, Dent Middle School
- **Second Place:** Ashanti Robinson, 9th Grade, Lower Richland High School

Seventeen students received awards in this year's Conservation Poster Contest, and several entries are on display in the USC Green Quad Learning Center and at Riverbanks Zoo and Botanical Gardens. Student posters addressed the topic "Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home," raising awareness about the importance of healthy watersheds and the impacts our actions have on water quality. Student posters illustrated the topic in a variety of ways, from a colorful atlas of South Carolina's major watersheds to paintings demonstrating how to keep watersheds clean. This year's winners are:

K-1st Grades:

- **First Place:** Natalie Elizabeth McElveen, 1st Grade, Logan Elementary School
- **Second Place:** Evan Carl Outlaw, 1st Grade, Catawba Trail Elementary School
- **Third Place:** Rylie Nicole Cureton, Kindergarten, Catawba Trail Elementary School

2nd-3rd Grades:

- **First Place:** Tanner James Toogood, 2nd Grade, Lake Carolina Elementary School
- **Second Place:** Marvin Jayvien Rivera, 3rd Grade, Catawba Trail Elementary School
- **Third Place:** Emerson Jane Edwards, 2nd Grade, Bookman Road Elementary School
- **Honorable Mention:** Jacob Wilcox Schatz, 2nd Grade, AC Moore Elementary School
- **Honorable Mention:** Siulis Adara Diaz Diaz, 3rd

10th-12th Grades:

- **First Place:** Mary Kathryn Davidson, 12th Grade, SC Association of Independent Home Schools
- **Second Place:** Zoria King, 11th Grade, Lower Richland High School

Winners received cash prizes and were recognized at the Richland SWCD's Annual Awards Banquet on May 17. Five entries will progress to the state competition sponsored by the SC Association of Conservation Districts.

Nearly 100 students submitted entries to this year's contest, and hundreds more learned about the contest topic through interactive presentations conducted in classrooms across Richland County. By participating in these programs and the poster contest, "students are learning how to make a difference in small ways," says Elizabeth Karnavas, a University of South Carolina senior and Richland SWCD Conservation Intern. "Sometimes negligence toward the environment is the result of a lack of knowledge, and these programs help students gain that environmental knowledge in a fun and memorable way."

The Conservation Poster Contest is an annual education program hosted by the Richland SWCD with support from the SC and National Associations of Conservation Districts. For more information about this or other conservation education programs, visit richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd.

Conservation Teacher of the Year: Amy Umberger

Amy Umberger was named Richland County’s Conservation Teacher of the Year by the Richland SWCD. Umberger is the Resident Scientist at Dutch Fork Elementary School Academy of Environmental Sciences (DFES). Through this role, she serves both teachers and students as they work to develop scientific and environmental literacy through authentic, inquiry-driven projects including waste reduction and recycling, composting, habitat restoration, gardening, and air and water quality projects.

Dr. David Shelley, Education Coordinator at Congaree National Park’s Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center, credits Umberger with helping him leverage the SC Academic Standards and Performance Indicators in Science to make National Park Service programs more relevant to K-12 audiences. “Amy is a fantastic educator, friend, and colleague,” says Shelley. “Her passion and her professionalism set her apart; she is always looking to improve things. This recognition is long overdue.”

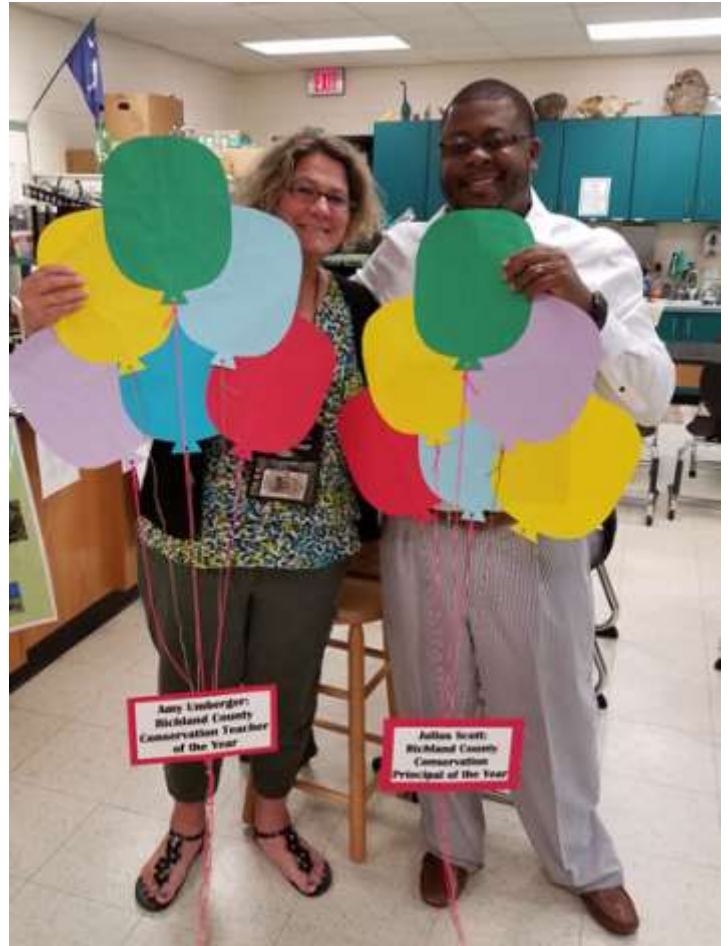
Visit richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd for more information about Umberger and her great work at DFES!

Conservation Principal of the Year: Julius Scott

Principal Julius Scott, also of DFES, was named Richland County’s Conservation Principal of the year by the Richland SWCD. Scott was nominated for this award by Jane Hiller, Education Coordinator for Sonoco Recycling and Director of the SC Green Steps School certification and award program.

“Outstanding environmental education rarely happens at a school without the support of the administration,” says Hiller, and there is no question that the education initiatives at DFES are exceptional. With projects ranging from a mini-farm to Trout in the Classroom to schoolwide commercial composting, DFES is a national role model for environmental education. Because of DFES’s leadership in food waste reduction through commercial composting, other schools in Lexington and Greenville Counties are piloting similar projects.

“Last summer, Julius traveled to Beaufort in the summer to address the Environmental Education Association of SC (EEASC) about DFES’s organic collection program,” says Hiller, providing examples of the ways Principal Scott goes



Amy Umberger and Principal Julius Scott of Dutch Fork Elementary School were named Richland County’s 2019 Conservation Teacher and Principal of the Year by the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District.

above and beyond to spread the word about the importance of school conservation efforts. “He also spoke at another EEASC workshop this winter about ‘Green Messaging’ [communicating about the environment] for diverse populations. His experiences as an African-American administrator in a racially diverse school helped many of us” reconsider the importance of “messaging that resonates with all students.”

“The effort that DFES has put forth is exemplary and personifies excellence in conservation and education,” says Richland SWCD Commissioner Jeff Laney. “The Richland SWCD is honored and proud to recognize their efforts.”

Visit richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd for more information about Scott and his efforts to promote conservation at DFES and throughout the region!

Volunteer of the Year: Mary Burts

Richland SWCD Associate Commissioner Mary Burts was recognized as Volunteer of the Year at the SWCD's Awards Banquet on May 17. Her contributions to the work of the SWCD include planting Arbor Day trees, scoring Envirothon performances, decorating venues for events, and developing new outreach programs. She also develops the themes for Richland SWCD Arbor Day and, formerly, Farm City Week youth contests; judges contest entries; and assists with the contest award presentations.

"Whenever we need help with a conservation event or education program, we know we can count on Mary!" says Richland SWCD Administrative Assistant Charlie Fisher. "We are fortunate to have such a fun, generous, and passionate conservationist on our team."

Burts began serving as an Associate Commissioner with the Richland SWCD in 2009 following more than 20 years of service in related groups including Farm City Week

Committee, 4H, Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, and others. "My father was an agronomist," Burts explains. "He instilled a love of the land, farming, and the environment through my childhood."

In addition to her service with the Richland SWCD, Burts works as an Adult Educator in Richland County School District One. She is a member of Kathwood Baptist Church where she serves as a deacon and in children's ministry. She is President of the women's service group Alpha Alpha Master Chapter Beta Sigma Phi. In 2017, she received the Linda Bleu Part-Time Teacher of the Year Award for SC Adult Education.

In appreciation for her service to the Richland SWCD, Burts was presented with a garden-themed statuette bearing the inscription "Mary Burts: Associate Commissioner Extraordinaire." Read more about Burts and learn how you can become involved at richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd/

Cooperator of the Year: J. Kenneth Mullis

The Richland SWCD recognized J. Kenneth Mullis of Blythewood as the Cooperator of the Year at its Awards Banquet on May 17. Among many other accomplishments, Mullis's work with the Twenty-five Mile Creek Watershed Program set him apart as this year's awardee.

Mullis, who lives and farms in the Twenty-five Mile Creek Watershed, participated in early stakeholder meetings for the watershed's water quality improvement project, then helped to negotiate the partnerships between local, state,

and federal entities that allowed the project to be successful. Next, Mullis began recruiting participants and installing BMPs on his own pastures. By the end of the project in 2018, Mullis had personally installed 1.7 miles of fencing on two farms, and he was responsible for the participation of several other landowners.

"Commissioner Mullis was the secret ingredient to the success of the Twenty-five Mile Creek Program," said Richland SWCD Education Coordinator Chanda Cooper.

"Thanks to him, conservation practices have been installed throughout the watershed to reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients, and bacteria entering the creek. This is a huge positive benefit to the environment and to the community."

Read more about Commissioner Mullis's accomplishments at richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd/.



Left to Right: Richland SWCD Cooperator of the Year J. Kenneth Mullis; Education Coordinator Chanda Cooper; Volunteer of the Year Mary Burts; Commissioners Jeff Laney and Jim Rhodes

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Thank you!



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Affiliate Members are a vital part of our conservation team. The financial support given by Affiliates helps us carry out many of our conservation and stewardship programs within the County. Please support our efforts by becoming an Affiliate Member today! Affiliate Memberships are good for **one year** from the date of application. Contributions are tax deductible.

- \$25—Affiliate Member
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- Mini-Grant Sponsor***: \$500 each

***Conservation Education Mini-Grants** are awarded to local schools to support conservation projects each fall and spring. Sponsors will be recognized in publicity materials.

Membership Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Please return this form and a check made payable to Richland Soil and Water Conservation District to:

Richland Soil and Water Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street, Rm. 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204

Thank you for your support!