



June 2024

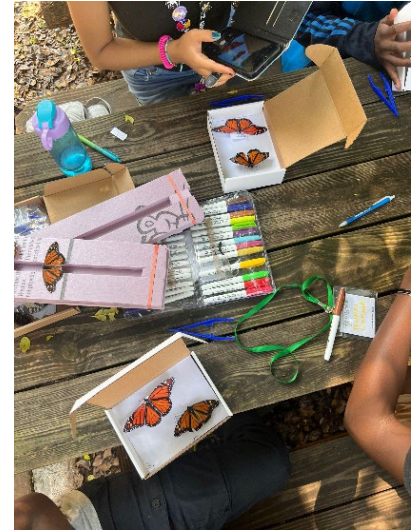
Soil & Water Report



Predatory Stink Bug Earns Respect in Sustaining Way Pilot Lesson



Abbi, Stormwater Programs Coordinator, and Haley, Education Intern, visited Annie's House to work with Sustaining Way scholars on a pilot lesson addressing soil health as it relates to pest control. Participants learned about careers at the intersection of entomology and soil stewardship. Pictured is the Florida Predatory Stink Bug, which participants found in their garden. This is an excellent example of a beneficial insect that helps control pests without the use of harmful insecticides.



Decomposing Skivvies Reveal Soil Health at Sustainer Core Event

Kirsten Robertson, Engineer/Manager, partnered with the Travelers Rest Farmers Market to teach about Soil Health at their Sustainer Core meeting in June. Kirsten shared several demonstrations about soil health and explained the benefits of healthy soil, which include helping water quality and water quantity.

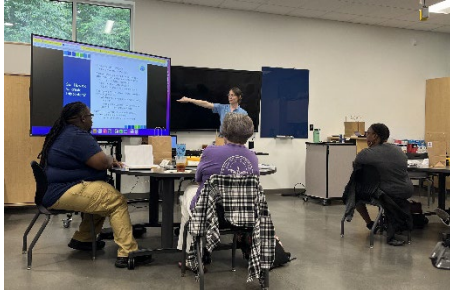
Everyone enjoyed the "ooh" and "aah" moments of the slake test and the rainfall simulator, but the best reactions came when she talked about 'soiling their undies'. This is a soil health experiment in which you bury a pair of white cotton underwear, wait 60 days, and then dig it up. The extent of the underwear's degradation is an indication of soil health. If the soil is rich in microbial life, the microbes will eat ALL of the cotton parts of the underwear and leave only the elastic parts.



June 2024

Soil & Water Report

S&W Team Informs Educators on Conservation Efforts



Abbi and Haley visited Roper Mountain Science Center's Science Plus Institute to speak to a group of K-12 science teachers about conservation districts as an educational resource. Abbi also shared her process for developing cross-cutting lessons related to soil and water conservation by demonstrating a lesson on microplastics with ties to mathematics and U.S. history standards.



Haley shared an activity she recently developed that blends watershed vocabulary, stormwater education and physical movement.

Lastly, all educators went home with a soil health kit!

Kids Learn About Stormwater and Preparing Healthy Snacks

In early June, the education team visited Slater Hall Community Center to facilitate two days of programming to a group of 50 children ages 6 to 12. Students enjoyed several activities based on Project WET curriculum.

Through a partnership with Clemson SNAP-Ed, Abbi and Haley visited three community centers throughout Greenville County to facilitate lessons that combined stormwater education and healthy nutrition practices. When visiting Nicholtown Community Center, nine students learned about stormwater pollution, soil horizons and safe kitchen knife skills.

During a visit to David Hellams Community center, 39 students participated in a lesson on the water cycle and prepared a stormwater snack mix with healthy components and proportions.

The final SNAP-Ed partnership visit was to Small Impressions Child Development Center, where Abbi taught 29 students about stormwater pollutants and got a tour of the summer garden planted by the five and six-year-olds.



June 2024

Soil & Water Report

Learning About S&W Is Fun with Parfaits and Water Balloons

The education team visited three Roper Mountain Science Center camps throughout the month of June (different from the RMSC Science Institute mentioned earlier). Using a modification of a Project WET activity, Abbi and Haley piloted a new lesson that combined watershed education with stormwater pollution awareness to a group of 12 students ranging from grades 5 to 7. The students celebrated the new lesson by creating soil horizon pudding parfaits!

First and second-grade students in Pop, Bang, Sputter camp enjoyed the opportunity to pilot a new lesson teaching watershed concepts involving reusable water balloons.

In the first week of Junior Master Gardener camp, the education team taught a lesson about stormwater pollution across a watershed using Envirosapes.



Plant and Soil Health Top LWG's List of Resource Concerns

Every year, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the country invite local producers and interested parties to weigh in on what they feel the biggest issues are regarding natural resources. The primary categories for Greenville County are forestland, cropland and grazing lands.

This year, the Greenville Local Work Group meeting was held at the Pelham Road Library on June 20. An online survey was supplied for those who could not make it to the meeting. This year's primary natural resource issues for each category were:

- Forestland – Plant productivity and health and wildlife habitat
- Cropland – Sediment transported to surface water and soil organism habitat loss
- Grazing Lands – Wildlife habitat and inadequate livestock water

This information will be forwarded to the NRCS State Office, where they will use it to choose the ranking priorities for federal funding of practices to help remedy the resource issues.

June 2024

Soil & Water Report

Stormwater

- **Responded to citizen questions** about stormwater issues, stormwater harvesting, rain barrels and soil testing
- **GCSWCD websites reached 3,494 page views this month.**
- Soil and Water staff continues to support the Reedy River Water Quality Group by serving on the Public Outreach Committee. **RRWQG websites CleanReedy.org and ReedyReportCard.org, maintained by Soil and Water staff, reached 2,769 visitors this month** in addition to the social media presence.
- **Distributed two Poop Fairy Signs and one Pet Waste Station** via cost share program
- **Multiple educational opportunities as outlined elsewhere in this newsletter**

Engineering

- Responded to **24 citizen requests** for drainage, flooding, erosion and sinkholes
- Responded to requests regarding the **easements on the 9 flood-control dams** in the County

Agriculture/Food Security

- Continued **Seed Library** partnership with the Greenville Library, providing free vegetable seeds to Greenville residents as a vector to give information about insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers
- **Held Local Working Group meeting for participants** to determine urgent resource concerns in the county

Interdepartmental Support

- **Litter Ends Here** – Supporting social media engagement
- **Keep Greenville County Beautiful** – On the board and working closely with new leadership

Social Media

| Stormwater | Total posts | Followers | Follower growth | Impressions |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|
| Facebook | 18 | 2,130 | +30 | 2,528 |
| Instagram | 18 | 1316 | +11 | 2,248 |
| LinkedIn | 6 | 171 | +11 | 1,192 |
| RRWQG | | | | |
| Facebook | 2 | 582 | +23 | 29 |
| Instagram | 0 | 129 | +1 | 0 |

June 2024

Soil & Water Report

District Reps Attend Annual Conference and EFASC Bat Night

District

- **EEASC Annual Conference** – District Manager Kirsten Robertson and the education team attended the Annual Environmental Education Association of South Carolina Conference in Spartanburg, SC. Throughout the conference, district employees attended workshops and talks focused on addressing challenges related to climate change. Both GCSWCD and its partner organization, SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition, were able to host booths during the final evening of the conference, allowing the dissemination of soil health education techniques for both gardeners and grazers.
- **SENACD Regional Meeting** – Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District Commission Chairman Mike Stewart attended the Southeast Region Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts in Gainesville, FL. This meeting is a valuable opportunity to discuss developing challenges and innovations in the field of conservation with other district employees. A highlight from this year’s meeting was a focus on Florida’s unique bat ecology.
- **EEASC Bat Night** – The education team attended an event through the Western Section of the Environmental Education Association of South Carolina. At the event, participants helped to collect citizen science data on Mexican Free tailed bat populations in northern Greenville County by completing emergence surveys with the guidance of SCDNR’s Jennifer Kindel, bat biologist.

State/National Partnerships

Staff continues to serve in partnerships with:

- SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition
- Environmental Education Association of South Carolina
- SE Association of Conservation Districts
- South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts
- South Carolina Conservation District Employee’s Assoc.
- Project WET USA
- Keep Greenville County Beautiful

