



MONTHLY REPORT

May 2025

**SOIL
&
WATER**



COMMISSIONER CHAIR STEWART REPRESENTS DISTRICT AT FIELD DAY



Commissioner Mike Stewart attended SCDNR's Stewardship Week Field Day at Belfast Wildlife Management, where he presented a brief overview of the Greenville Seed Library, how the district promotes healthy habitats and why he chose to serve as a commissioner. He presented at the bat station.



COUNTY RESPONDS TO RESIDENT'S ISSUE AND SOLVES PROBLEM



Soil and Water is often contacted by residents experiencing unusual flooding in their yards. Recently, a resident called about an issue and they surmised that a culvert that goes part-way through their yard and under a county road was blocked. Kirsten Robertson contacted the county's excellent County Engineer, Hunter Crumley, who asked his intrepid maintenance camp to investigate. As it turned out, the culvert was definitely clogged. Maintenance was able to clear the debris, and the pipe was able to flow as before. Job well done using the extraordinary teamwork within Greenville County! Not all heroes wear capes.



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DISTRICT HONORS AWARD RECIPIENTS AT ANNUAL BANQUET

The district hosted its annual Awards Banquet at Famoda Farms in May. Attendees gathered for a catered meal of barbecue and all the fixings with live entertainment provided by the district's very own Commissioner Jim Blackwell and company.

Before recognizing award recipients, Commissioner Chair Mike Stewart took a moment to outline the district's accomplishments over the year, including being named 2024 Outstanding Conservation District of the Year, the receipt of a governor's proclamation during Stewardship Week and the District Manager Kirsten Robertson's Hugh Bennett "Excellence in Conservation" award for the South East Region, given by the National Association of Conservation Districts at its annual conference.



Commissioner Christopher Hall presented the awards for the evening. The Volunteer of the Year award went to the Environmental Club at the S.C. Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities; Jaime Hattendorf won Educator of the Year; Jessica Gates took Farmer of the Year; and Haley Denison with Renewable Water Resources was named Conservationist of the Year.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Environmental Club (EC) has been invaluable in stocking seed for the district's Seed Library, located at the Berea library branch. The Seed Library provides free seeds to one of Greenville's food deserts, enabling patrons to grow their own food. The seeds are all packed by volunteers, and the EC has packed more than 8,000 seed packets for the Seed Library, which is nearly a third of the average packets distributed at the Seed Library in a year. Special thanks goes to Nathaniel Greenburg and Charlie Ratteree, club president and VP, for coordinating the seed packing efforts.





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EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Kudos to Jaime Hattendorf, a teacher at JL Mann Academy with a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction as well as a Masters in Biological Science. She has been a long-time coach leading teams to the South Carolina Envirothon. The SC Envirothon is a competition that tests students on their knowledge of soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife and a current topic, plus give an oral presentation. In 2024, JL Mann took home first place in the Current Topics category, and in 2025, the school won third place in Soils.



FARMER OF THE YEAR

Bravo Jessica Gates, the heart and hands behind Harvest Moon Farm and Flower, recognized as Farmer of the Year. She has demonstrated a commitment to sustainable, mindful farming and has created a business that stands as a model of integrity and resilience. She also provided all the floral centerpieces for this year's banquet. Her work reminds us that farming isn't just about production; it's about stewardship.



CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Haley Denison, a Watershed and Natural Resource Specialist at Renewable Water Resources. A graduate of Champlain College with a bachelor's degree in environmental policy with a minor in law, Haley has since filled many roles related to water quality and watershed conservation. During her time at Clemson University, she worked with students to design green infrastructure to implement stormwater best management practices on campus. Currently, she provides strategic and tech support for ReWa's environmental initiatives. And she partners with the district as a member of the Reedy River Water Quality Group's Public Outreach Committee.





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WORKSHOP PUTS PARTICIPANTS IN THE MUCK AND MIRE

District Manager Kirsten Robertson attended a streambank stabilization workshop hosted by Anderson Soil and Water Conservation District (ASWCD) on a cold, rainy day at the end of May. District employees from several districts came together to learn and battle erosion together. The workshop was funded by a grant procured by ASWCD.



GROW SOIL-SAVING PLANTS IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD



To improve the health of your soil and fight erosion, try these soil-saving plants that can be grown in your own backyard:

Clover | When you mix clover in with your grass, you not only aid in soil health, but you attract beneficial in-

sects like ladybugs and add color and texture to your landscape.

Legumes | These plants are nitrogen and carbon fixing; their deep roots draw nutrients closer to the surface; and they are yummy to eat. Add them to your vegetable patch.

Trees | Their benefits are undeniable: improves water quality, drainage and soil structure plus recycle nutrients. What to plant? Consider native fruit trees.

Cover crops | These quick-growing plants are ideal for keeping soil covered during the cold season and protect it from erosion. They also help retain and recycle nutrients, add organic matter to the soil and improve soil structure.

