

ANNUAL REPORT

2024





Our Mission

Our mission is to protect natural resources through education, programs, and cooperative efforts with partner organizations to achieve common goals for the benefit of all citizens of Greenville County with efforts in promoting:

Urban and Land Use Planning | Conservation Awareness | Sustainable Agriculture

District Commissioners



Michael Stewart
Chairman



Robert Hanley
Vice Chair



Jim Blackwell
Treasurer



Margaret Harrison
Commissioner



Christopher Hall
Commissioner



Danny Howard
Assoc. Comm.



Fred Payne
Assoc. Comm.

From our District Manager

Hello friends!

What a momentous year we've had! I am thrilled with our new bright and shiny staff and their fresh ideas. I will only share engineering and soil health news here since there are places others will share their programs later in the report.

Boring but important - The district maintains nine dams in the county that were built by the federal government over 50 years ago. These dams were designed to hold back flood waters as well as catch sediment; thereby addressing both water quantity and water quality in the county. Last year, NRCS paid to have our dams assessed by an outside firm to ensure that they are hydraulically fit. The dams have reached the end of their design life and we are looking forward to hearing the reports from the consultants. In the meantime, we have completed our normal dam maintenance and SC Department of Environmental Services inspections. In other engineering support for citizens, I continue to talk to and meet with dozens of citizens per month regarding drainage, erosion and flooding on their properties.

Exciting and important - In soil health news, we continue to create new resources for those who want to learn more about soil health. This year, we developed a new class and booklet with five experiments you can do at home to test your soil health. It comes with videos as well! We are extremely proud of this program, and would love to come share it with your group.

We hope you will continue to watch our progress. Feel free to chime in with ideas and let us know how we are doing. We value your input. My number is 864-467-4996. Call anytime!

Healthy soils to you!

Kirsten Robertson
Manager

A Message from the Chairman

Conservation friends and colleagues,

As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate the milestones, challenges, and achievements that have shaped our journey. This year has been one of growth, innovation, and resilience, and we are proud of the collective efforts that have propelled us forward.

One of the most significant moments of the year was honoring the late Lynn Pilewski of the Greenville Soil and Water Conservation District in Greenville, SC, with the NCDEA Outstanding Conservation District Professional Award. Lynn dedicated a decade of service to her district, reaching over three million residents annually through her programs and outreach efforts as a program coordinator. She was an active leader on numerous boards, committees, and councils, and her passion for environmental education left a lasting impact. Additionally, at the 2024 Southeast Conservation District Employees Association (SECDEA) Annual Conference in Pigeon Forge, she was recognized as the SECDEA Employee of the Year for the Southeast. Previously honored as the State Conservationist of the Year in 2017, Lynn was widely admired for her expertise, dedication, and commitment to conservation. Though she is no longer with us, her contributions and legacy continue to inspire us all.

We are also incredibly proud of Kirsten Robertson, who received the Hugh Hammond Bennett Regional Award for Conservation Excellence for the Southeast Region Producer at the 2025 National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City. This prestigious honor reflects her unwavering commitment to conservation and her outstanding contributions to sustainable land stewardship. Her dedication exemplifies the spirit of innovation and excellence that drives our work forward.

Adding to our district's accomplishments, the Greenville Soil and Water Conservation District was named the 2024 District of the Year at the 2025 South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) Annual Partnership Conference. This recognition is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team and commissioners, whose commitment to conservation continues to make a lasting impact on our community.

I want to take a moment to thank our team for another year of dedication and for leading by example. A special thank you goes to Associate Commissioner Fred Payne for his continued efforts to establish and grow our Envirothon program in Greenville County. His commitment has provided invaluable opportunities for students to engage in hands-on environmental education, and we are excited to see what our teams will accomplish at the state competition in April and beyond.

With a new year comes renewed hope and fresh challenges. As we move forward, our team remains steadfast in our commitment to supporting our community through locally led conservation at the county, state, and national levels. Through outreach, education, and advocacy, we will continue working to protect our natural resources and foster a sustainable future for generations to come.

These achievements, along with the dedication of our teams, partners, and supporters, reinforce our shared mission to protect and preserve our natural resources. As we look ahead, we remain committed to fostering collaboration, innovation, and stewardship to ensure a lasting impact on conservation efforts.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to another year of success and progress!

Sincerely,

Mike Stewart

Chair

Remembering Lynn Pilewski

It is with the heaviest of hearts that we must share our dear coworker and friend, Lynn Pilewski, has passed away. Lynn served as our District Programs Coordinator for just over ten years and greatly expanded the reach of many district programs.

Lynn was never shy to volunteer for leadership positions and let her capabilities as a leader and organizer shine through to countless organizations. For several years, she served as the President of the South Carolina Conservation Districts Employee Association, leading the group through many challenges such as funding issues, conservation district employee development, outreach initiatives, the COVID pandemic, and ultimately enhanced support for locally led conservation.

Furthermore, Lynn held the position of Project WET State Coordinator for many years. In this role, Lynn trained educators on Project WET curriculum, helped to plan the annual conferences, and provided continual support for a large network of Project WET facilitators in South Carolina and beyond.

Despite entering her role as District Programs Coordinator with limited soil and water conservation knowledge, Lynn truly grew into an inspiring and knowledgeable environmental educator throughout her tenure with Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District. Her background in theatre and web design, combined with a love for gardening, allowed her to make comprehensive, cohesive, and creative graphic design campaigns for the district. Also notable was her tireless role in planning our annual awards banquet, a task in which she truly excelled.

Over the last few years, Lynn bravely fought cancer while never ceasing to be a reliable friend, coworker, and educator. While we are deeply saddened by her passing, we are able to take comfort in knowing Lynn is no longer in pain and is able to rest. We will always remember Lynn's can-do attitude, her efficient and organized nature, and her incredible knack for choosing color palettes!



In Honor of Lynn

Awards & Appreciation Celebration

In May, we celebrated our partners and Conservation Award winners at our annual Awards & Appreciation Celebration. We gathered at Famoda Farm and supported local producers.

Congratulations to the 2024 award winners:

Erin Knight, Conservationist of the Year
CE and Rachel Lawton, Farmer of the Year
Katie Martin, Teacher of the Year

Erin Knight



CE and Rachel Lawton



Katie Martin



Awards & Appreciation Celebration



State and National Recognition

Greenville Soil and Water is proud of the achievements of our commissioners and staff. In 2024, several of our folks were honored with state and national recognition.



Kirsten Robertson

District Manager, Kirsten Robertson, received the 2024 Hugh Hammond Bennett Southeast Regional Producer Award by the National Association of Conservation Districts. Awarded to a total of seven individuals in the entire country, this award recognizes producers and conservation planners for extraordinary achievements and contributions to the soil and water conservation movement in the United States.

District of the Year

The Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District was named Outstanding Conservation District of the Year by the SC Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD). The team was recognized for a number of major 2024 accomplishments, including the creation of a stormwater conveyance and rain garden at Roper Mountain Science Center, designed to manage runoff using pools to filter some of the water into the ground before it travels downstream. Other noteworthy accomplishments included a series of soil health workshops and the redesign of storm drain curb markers.



Katie Martin

The district's 2024 Teacher of the Year, Katie Martin with Lakeview Middle School was named SCACD Educator of the Year for her commitment to conservation education. Prior to establishing an all-new FFA Chapter at Lakeview, Katie worked for Woodmont Middle School where she introduced many students to FFA and led them to win many State and National awards.



Award Gallery



Seed Library

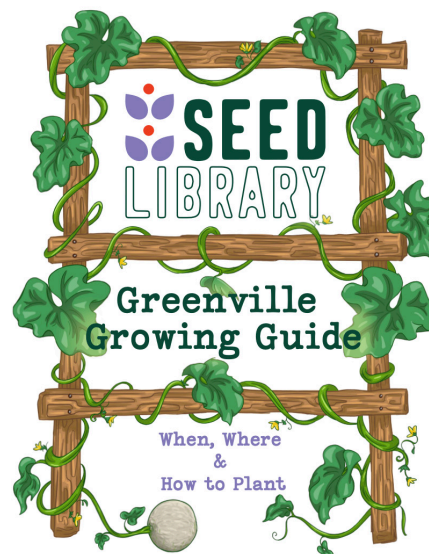
The Greenville Post & Courier featured an article in January on the GCSWCD's Seed Library project detailing the importance of water quality in the county and how the project is making a difference. The article highlights how the program has grown from its inception in 2019 and how collective contribution from individuals across the county lends help to waterways:

"In 2019, [The Seed Library] doled out 17,220 seed packets. In 2023, it distributed 33,230."

Early in 2024, Soil and Water participated in an international seed library census orchestrated by The Seed Library Network. In May of 2024, Soil and Water was recognized for the standout seed envelope design and thorough growing guide.

These designs were shared as a part of The Seed Library Network's workshops on Envelopes and Labeling, which took place in June of 2024. These workshops are part of the Seed Library Network's series titled Seed Library Best Practices and Inspiration. We value this recognition and the opportunity to share resources with seed libraries across the world!

In 2024 The seed Library also released three Stormwater Stamps: Dirty Water Bugs Us, Soil Health Matters!, and Companion Planting. The Dirty Water Bugs Us stamp promotes the planting of native seeds to attract native pollinators and beneficial insects, which prey on pests to avoid the use of insecticide. The Soil Health Matters! stamp is placed on plants in the legume family, which add nitrogen to your soil. This enriches the nutrients in your soil while reducing the need for fertilizers. Finally, the Companion Planting stamp is placed on all the companions. The companions are plants which complement one another when planted next to each other while contributing to soil stabilization and preventing erosion.




Storm Drain Markers

CHECK THIS OUT!

Why mark your storm drain?

- Fewer clogs
 - Less flooding
 - Cleaner rivers!

Want to mark your own?
Scan the code to learn more!



GREENVILLE COUNTY
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Stormwater Programs Coordinator Abbi Greer and District Programs Coordinator Haley Mumaw redesigned the district's storm drain curb markers, creating a fun and eye-catching marker to help raise awareness about runoff pollutants.



Soil Health Workshop

Greenville County SWCD hosted a soil health workshop for Advanced New and Beginning Farmers in March. The all-day workshop was hosted at the Augusta Road Ruritan, and after lunch participants visited manager Kirsten Robertson's farm as well as Farm in the Wildwood in Piedmont.

Participants learned advanced soil health principles with brand new resources that GCSWCD has generated. These resources include menus of gardening and/or grazing practices. It ties the practices back to the soil health principles they address. This is state-of-the-art information that is impressing soil health advocates across the United States.

Another new and innovative resource shared was a Soil Health Toolkit: Hands-on Experiments to Understand Your Soil. These five experiments are unusual ways to check the microbiology in the soil. The workshop was well received by all attendees.



SOIL HEALTH 101

Soil Toolkit:
Hands-On Experiments
to Understand Your Soil

Imagine A Day Without Water Festival

The district partnered with MetroConnects, Greer Commission of Public Works, Greenville Water, and Renewable Water Resources to organize, promote, and facilitate the annual Imagine a Day Without Water Festival, held in memory of the late Lynn Pilewski. Designed to build awareness and celebrate the importance of water in everyday life, Stormwater Programs Coordinator Abbi Greer and District Programs Coordinator Haley Mumaw worked with several agencies and vendors who welcomed about 250 visitors during the October 17th event.



From the District Conservationist/NRCS

Getting Conservation on the Ground in Greenville

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) to address resource concerns such as erosion, water quality, soil health or wildlife.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps farmers build on their existing conservation efforts while strengthening their operation. Whether farmers are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop yields, or develop wildlife habitat, NRCS can design a CSP plan to help meet those goals.

This year, CSP and EQIP dollars supported projects covering cropland, forestland and pastureland in Greenville county. This is in addition to the funding that NRCS brings to the county every year in the form of professionals, and equipment to provide technical support to our farmers.

If you have a farm or timberland and would like assistance in improving the resources on your land, give us a call to schedule a visit.



Meet Our Staff



District Staff

Staff Directory

Kirsten Robertson	District Manager	864-467-4996
Abbi Greer	Stormwater Programs Coordinator	864-467-4997
Haley Mumaw	District Programs Coordinator	864-467-4998
Collin Buckner	NRCS District Conservationist	864-920-6402
Melody Key	NRCS Soil Conservationist	864-920-6396
Lainey Veltri	Administrative Assistant	864-467-4995

Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District

301 University Ridge, Suite S-4100

Greenville, SC 29601

864-467-2755

www.greenvillesoilandwater.com

@gcsoilandwater

GREENVILLE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
301 University Ridge, S-4100
Greenville, SC 29601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PLEASE DELIVER TO:

