MONTHLY REPORT

May 2026

SOIL & WATER

COMPOSTING: TURN FOOD SCRAPS INTO A VALUABLE RESOURCE

District Programs Coordinator Olivia Reed presented a library workshop on composting at Hughes Main library, where interested citizens were able to learn about the basics of composting and how it works.

Citizens learned about how to build a compost pile with the correct ratio of "browns" to "greens," how to maintain their compost pile and troubleshooting. They learned the environmental, sustainability and economic benefits of composting food as well as tried their hand at "building their own compost pile" with an activity to test their knowledge. Participants left with handouts to reinforce learning.

4 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR COMPOSTING SUCCESS

Microorganisms need a few basic things to thrive and break down your waste efficiently:

- **The Right Ratio:** Aim for a mix of about 2 to 3 parts "browns" for every 1 part "greens."
- **Moisture:** Your pile should feel like a wrung-out sponge. If it's too dry, the microbes go dormant; if it's too wet, it will rot and smell.
- **Airflow:** Microbes need oxygen to breathe and work. Turn your compost pile or aerate it with a pitchfork every 1 to 2 weeks to keep it fluffy.
- **Surface Area:** Chop large items into smaller pieces (like apple cores or thick stems) so they break down much faster.

WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ BEHIND THE BLOOMS?

conservation corner
SUSTAINABLE TIPS FOR A GREENER TOMORROW

June is National Pollinator Month. This is the perfect time to celebrate the hard-working insects that keep the Upstate ecosystem vibrant. Bees, butterflies and moths do much more than beautify our yards. They are essential workers that keep our local environment alive and thriving.

WHY DO LOCAL POLLINATORS MATTER?

- **Bees** are absolute champion pollinators. Native species like the blue orchard bee and Southern carpenter bee pollinate our crops and wildflowers. They ensure Upstate farms can produce fresh summer favorites like peaches, berries and tomatoes.
- **Butterflies** are excellent daylight travelers. Beautiful species like the Monarch and the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail carry pollen over vast distances across South Carolina. This genetic mixing keeps our plant life resilient and strong.
- **Moths** are unsung heroes of the night shift. Moths handle evening pollination duties for nocturnal plants. They also serve as a foundational food source for native Upstate birds and bats.

3 WAYS YOU CAN PROTECT POLLINATORS

- **Plant Native Flora**: Swap out generic lawn decorations for native plants like purple coneflower, milkweed and black-eyed Susans. They are perfectly adapted to our climate and provide the best nutrition.
- **Rethink Pesticides**: Avoid spraying harsh chemicals on your garden. These sprays do not differentiate between pesky pests and helpful pollinators. Switch to natural pest management whenever possible.
- **Create a Pollinator Hydration Station**: Fill a shallow dish with water and place small rocks inside. This allows bees and butterflies to land and drink safely without the risk of drowning.

By making small changes in our own backyards, we can ensure that the beautiful Upstate landscape remains healthy for generations to come.

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT WATERSHED ECOLOGY

Stormwater Programs Coordinator Kendall Juell visited Riverside Middle School 7th grade classes to present an interactive watershed ecology program, highlighting the relationships among soil and water organisms, the landscape and human impacts to watershed ecosystems.

Students explored the definition of a watershed, South Carolina's river basins, the influence of the water cycle on local ecology, types of stormwater pollution, and how healthy soil relates to healthy waterways.

Juell demonstrated erosion and runoff using the Rainfall Simulator with the help of student volunteers, and engaged the groups in a water quality biotic index activity in which students identified and classified macroinvertebrate cutouts into groups based on pollution tolerance.

The presentation wrapped up by challenging students to determine which image of a stream their macroinvertebrate "sample" came from, and ways to improve water quality by considering our actions on land.

TEAM GETS IN THE WEEDS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

District Commissioner Rob Hanley and Stormwater Programs Coordinator Kendall Juell joined Friends of the Reedy River for a volunteer workday at the new Reedy River Meadow along the Swamp Rabbit Trail to identify and remove invasives including Johnson grass, and to mulch the site to prepare for future native plantings.

The site is near the end of its plant removal stage and is making progress to protect the Reedy from pollutants while serving as beneficial habitat for local pollinators and wildlife.

YEAR-END GARDEN PARTY DROP-IN OFFERS FRESH TREATS

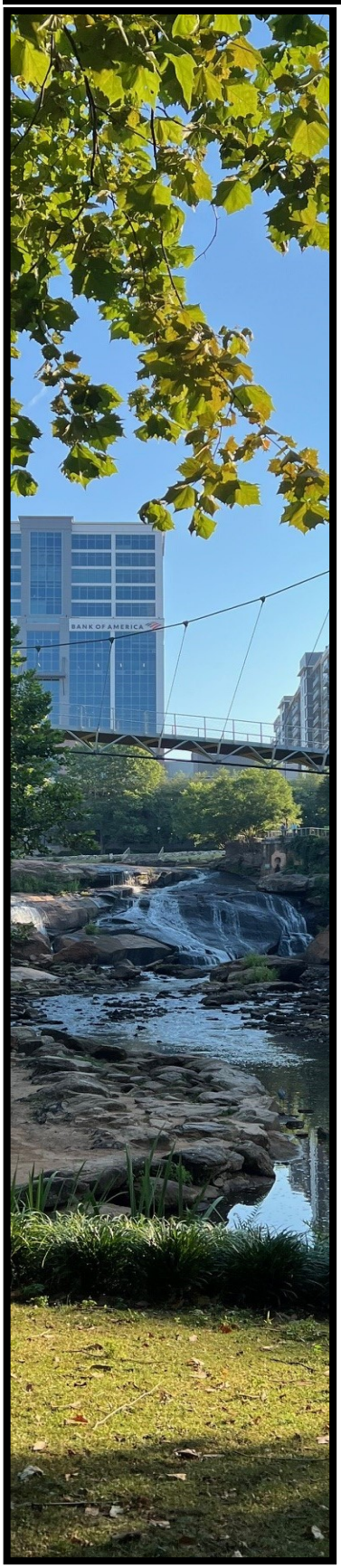
The district's team attended A.J. Whittenburg Elementary School's year-end Garden Party Drop-in to show support for the school's gardening efforts. A.J. Whittenburg is notable for being the first elementary school in the state to feature a fully integrated curriculum centered entirely on engineering and STEM concepts.

At the drop-in, students served a fresh salad and gave away fruit and vegetable plants, and potted flowers.

REEDY LAUREL ELEMENTARY CELEBRATES SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR

Also this month, the team took a field trip to tour Reedy Laurel Elementary School, a local school that offers specialized programming centered entirely around environmental science.

The school is a state-of-the-art facility engineered to function as an immersive living laboratory. The campus includes an on-site greenhouse, a hydrophonics "wet lab," a pollinator garden and an advanced technology lab, all designed to foster a lifelong love for nature and sustainability.



>>> SOCIAL MEDIA

Stormwater	Total posts	Followers	Follower growth	Impressions
Facebook	5	2,176	+3	2266
Instagram	5	1,471	-7	943
RRWQG				
Facebook	0	593	+2	622
Instagram	0	203	+4	454
GCSWCD Websites	Total views			
	1031			
RRWQG Website	Total views			
	554			

>>> STORMWATER

- **Responded to 6 citizen questions** about stormwater issues, stormwater harvesting, rain barrels and soil testing
- GCSWCD websites had **1,031 page views** this month.
- Distributed **4 Poop Fairy** signs and **4 pet waste stations** ordered.
- 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, are maintained by Soil and Water staff**.

>>> ENGINEERING

- Responded to **5 citizen requests** for sink holes, drainage and flooding issues.

>>> 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
- Made **no-till drill, a roller crimper and soil penetrometer available** to county farmers

>>> INTERDEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT

- **Litter Ends Here** - Supporting social media engagement, participation on the board
- **Keep Greenville County Beautiful** - Participate on the board and work closely with leadership