

82<sup>nd</sup> Annual

# South Carolina Conservation **PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE**

South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts  
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resources Conservation Service



# THANK YOU!

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# Conference Agenda

## Monday, January 22, 2024

Embassy Suites of Kingston Plantation - Myrtle Beach, SC

10:30 am – 4:00 pm	<b>Conference Registration</b> <i>Cambridge Hall</i>
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<b>South Carolina Conservation District Employees Association Session</b> <i>Windsor B</i>	
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	<b>Employee Lunch</b>
12:30 pm – 1:15 pm	<b>Rare Species Conservation in SC</b> Sudie Thomas, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
1:15 pm - 1:30 pm	<b>Break</b>
1:30 pm – 2:15 pm	<b>Engaging Next Generation Conservationists</b> Mark Weller and Team, AmeriCorps SC
2:15 pm - 2:30 pm	<b>Break</b>
2:30 pm – 3:15 pm	<b>Commissioner Engagement &amp; Relationship Building</b> Denise Spencer, PhilanTOPICS LLC
3:15 pm - 3:30 pm	<b>Break</b>
3:30 pm – 5:00 pm	<b>SCCDEA Business Meeting</b> Presiding: Crista Lukoski, SCCDEA President

<b>Conservation District Training</b>	
2:00 pm – 4:30 pm	<b>Conservation District Basics Training</b> SCDNR Conservation Districts Team <i>Somerset</i>

<b>Conference Welcome Reception</b>	
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm	<b>Welcome Reception</b> <i>Hotel Evening Reception Area</i>

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2024

# Tuesday, January 23, 2024

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024

7:30 am	<b>Registration</b> <i>Cambridge Hall</i>
8:00 am	<b>Breakfast</b> <i>Hotel Breakfast Area</i>
9:00 am – 9:30 am	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> <i>Kensington ABCG</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presiding:</b> Jeff Wilson, President, SCACD</li> <li>• <b>Invocation:</b> Gerald Mabry, Colleton SWCD</li> <li>• <b>Presentation of Colors:</b> Myrtle Beach High School NJROTC</li> <li>• <b>Pledge of Allegiance:</b> Jim Rhodes, Richland SWCD</li> <li>• <b>Welcome and Introductions:</b> Jeff Wilson, President SCACD</li> </ul>

<b>General Session I</b> <i>Kensington ABCG</i>	
9:30 am – 10:15 am	<b>Using Minds &amp; Hearts in Our Work</b> Dr. Easley, NACD – Keynote Speaker
10:15 am – 10:30 am	<b>Network Break, SCCDEA Raffle &amp; Exhibits</b>
10:30 am – 11:00 am	<b>Knowing Who We Are</b> Greg Henderson, Greenwood SWCD
11:00 am – 11:30 am	<b>Local Work Group Impact</b> SC Local Work Group Committee, Aiken SWCD
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	<b>Network Break, SCCDEA Raffle &amp; Exhibits</b>
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	<b>Conference Luncheon</b> <i>Kensington ABCG</i>
12:30 pm – 1:00 pm	<b>Partnership Reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NRCS:</b> Ann English, State Conservationist</li> <li>• <b>SCDNR:</b> Robert Boyles, Director</li> <li>• <b>SCCDEA:</b> Crista Lukoski, President</li> <li>• <b>SC Conservation Districts Foundation:</b> Sterling Sadler, Chair</li> </ul>
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	<b>SC Farm Bureau Land Trust</b> Richard Carr



# Tuesday, January 23, 2024

<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	
<b>Windsor A</b>	
2:10 pm – 3:00 pm	<b>Commissioners and Easements Q&amp;A</b> Commissioners Jeff Wilson (Chester), Ethan Bedford (Chester), & Jim Blackwell (Greenville)
3:00 pm – 3:10 pm	<b>Break / Rotation</b>
3:10 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>Applying Enrichment Principles to Your Work</b> Dr. Easley, NACD

<b>Windsor B</b>	
2:10 pm – 2:40 pm	<b>NACD Stewardship Week Initiative</b> Brooke Myres, SCDNR
2:40 pm – 2:50 pm	<b>Break / Rotation</b>
2:50 pm – 3:20 pm	<b>SCACD Foundation and Your Conservation District</b> Sterling Sadler, Kirby Player & Marc Cribb, SCCDF
3:20 pm – 3:30 pm	<b>Break / Rotation</b>
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>Enhancing Watershed and Conservation District Partnerships</b> John Hayes, SCDNR

<b>Windsor C</b>	
2:10 pm – 2:40 pm	<b>How to Get Started with SCACD Grants and Agreements</b> Joy Sullivan, SCACD
2:40 pm – 2:50 pm	<b>Break / Rotation</b>
2:50 pm – 3:20 pm	<b>Effective LWG Facilitation</b> Jessie Egan & Jen Morris, SCDNR
3:20 pm – 3:30 pm	<b>Break / Rotation</b>
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>Ag &amp; Art and Conservation Districts</b> Chanda Cooper (Richland) and Ben Setzler (Newberry)

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	<b>Conservation Districts Foundation Meeting</b> <i>Windsor A</i> <b>NRCS Staff Meeting</b> <i>Windsor B</i>
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<b>Evening Events</b> <i>Kensington ABCG</i>	
5:30 pm – 6:00 pm	<b>Reception</b>
6:00 pm	<b>Partnership Awards Dinner</b>

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024

# Partnership Awards Dinner

## Welcoming Remarks

Jeff Wilson, SCACD President

## Invocation

Reverend Gerald T. Mabry, SCACD Chaplain

## Plated Dinner

## Entertainment

Michael Mills – Country Comedy

## Awards Presentation

Commissioner Length of Service: Tyler Brown, SCDNR

District Employee Longevity Awards: Crista Lukoski, SCCDEA President

SCACD Awards Presentation

## SCCDEA Raffle

## Closing Remarks

Jeff Wilson, SCACD President

### *Presentation of Awards*

#### **Commissioner Length of Service**

Presented by Tyler Brown, SCDNR

#### **20 Years of Service**

Johney L. Haralson, Bamberg

#### **25 Years of Service**

John Rice, Allendale

Brenda Hartzog Nettles, Barnwell

Diane Edwins, Berkeley

Gary Moore, Lancaster

William Covington, Marlboro

Lee Keese, Oconee

#### **30 Years of Service**

Henry Gettys, Cherokee

#### **35 Years of Service**

Denise M. Parsick, Beaufort

Luke H. Inabinett, Beaufort

#### **40 Years of Service**

Jefferson H. Wilson, Chester

James C. Lynch, Sr., Florence

William Greg Henderson, Greenwood

#### **45 Years of Service**

William G. Smith III, Edgefield

Joe A. Derrick, Edgefield

Norris Fowler, Jr., Union

## District Employee Longevity Awards

Presented by Crista Lukoski, SCCDEA President

### 5 years

Tammi McAlhany, Dorchester  
Pamela Richey, Anderson  
Anna Makiewicz, Sumter

### 10 years

Lynn Pilewski, Greenville  
Aimee Brown, Pickens  
Quinton Epps, Richland  
Tiffany Gleaton, Bamberg

### 15 years

Kirsten Robertson, Greenville

### 25 years

Lisa Wilds, Marion  
Diane Curlee, Orangeburg

## Conservation Awards

### **Outstanding Conservation District Award**

Anderson Soil and Water Conservation District

### **Outstanding Conservation District Commissioner**

Michael Stewart, Greenville SWCD

### **Outstanding District Employee Award**

Debra Way, Beaufort SWCD

### **Conservation Educator of the Year – Primary Level (K-6)**

Tim Taylor, Greenville County

### **Conservation Educator of the Year – Secondary Level (7-12)**

Kirstin Bullington, Richland County

## ***Outstanding Conservation District Award*** **Anderson Soil and Water Conservation District**

Over the past three years, Anderson Soil and Water Conservation District (ASWCD) has demonstrated immense leadership in conservation through exponential growth of their education, technical assistance, and outreach programs. In part, this growth is thanks to applying and receiving major grants: Kinder Morgan Pipeline Spill Grant for the district's education and outreach initiatives; NACD Technical Assistance Grant for assisting with Farm Bill Programs; and assisting with securing funds for Anderson County Watershed Districts assessments.

ASWCD has focused on improving their education and outreach programs to offer an especially critical resource for educators and the public because there are not many resources of this nature in the county due to it being a rural, low-income area. Additionally, many of the programs reach USDA Food Deserts. ASWCD education resources include an Enviroscape table, soil erosion tables, free teacher resources and materials including eight Water Trunks, several water related education and outreach programs, a Community Seed Library (9,160 seed packets checked out and 1,830 visitors in 2023), along with being very active in SC Envirothon. In 2023, the district directly supported the public through hosting/participating in over 45 community events.

Beyond educating and providing resources to the citizens of Anderson County, ASWCD provides technical assistance to the public through accepting and processing conservation program applications, performing field visits, as well as designing and checking conservation practices. ASWCD has been a huge asset to the Anderson NRCS Field Office in reducing their workload backlog.

Anderson Soil and Water Conservation District is a resourceful, exemplary resource for Anderson County citizens! ASWCD is a model district that works hard to showcase the importance and impact of locally led conservation found at the root of Soil and Water Conservation Districts nationwide.



## ***Outstanding Conservation District Commissioner***

### **Michael Stewart, Greenville SWCD**

Michael Stewart was elected as a Greenville Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner and began to serve on February 1, 2019. In 2020, he moved into the Vice Chair position of the district and in 2021 rotated into the Chairman's role. Through his dedication as Chair, Commissioner Stewart was instrumental with Greenville County Council regarding Agricultural Zoning and Riparian Buffer initiatives. Additionally, he is very engaged with the Greenville Watershed Districts ensuring that when issues arise, he personally meets with citizens to hear their concerns. Always yearning for more involvement, Commissioner Stewart has faithfully served as the West Piedmont Area Representative with SCACD for two terms and is nominated to serve as SCACD Treasurer for 2024. Stepping up to the call of service, in 2022 Commissioner Stewart was nominated to serve as the South Carolina NACD Alternate Representative which had him engaged at all national NACD meetings. Of particular note, Commissioner Stewart is the first Commissioner in South Carolina to complete the NACD Next Generation Leadership Institute (NGLI) of which only 7 participants are accepted annually. NGLI is a coveted leadership academy that is designed for those who are emerging leaders nationally for Conservation Districts. Additionally, he is involved with the Conestee Nature Preserve, Friends of Dupont, Save Our Saluda, and Friends of the Reedy River. Chairman Stewart is an asset to conservation within the Greenville Soil and Water Conservation District and the state of South Carolina as a whole!

## ***Outstanding District Employee Award***

### **Debra Way, Beaufort SWCD**

Debra (Debby) Way has worked for the Beaufort Soil and Water Conservation District as a part-time educator for 17 years. When no one else is available, Debby is always willing to serve the district and the constituents of Beaufort County. She has served as a mentor with new employees and continues to be Beaufort's Education Program leader. As a classroom educator, Debby has enhanced Beaufort's conservation classroom programs and developed new ones. Debby cares for the district's educational animals: Checkers, a corn snake for the Snake program, and earth worms for the Soil Tunnel program. These animals provide children the opportunity to truly get their hands dirty. Always being adaptive to challenges, she learned how to use Zoom to deliver programs to classrooms during the COVID-19 Pandemic. She cheerfully represents the district at many community festivals and recruits help when the district is shorthanded. Additionally, Debby has been instrumental in planning and teaching the district's yearly summer Eco Camp where her naturalist and craft skills really shine! Debby always steps up and pulls together all the logistics to make an exciting, successful experience for the campers. Lastly, Debby leaves an impact through her volunteer efforts that mutually benefit the Beaufort Soil and Water Conservation District. These volunteer efforts include, but are not limited to, Adopt-A-Stream, SC Audubon Society, Garden Clubs, Friends of Port Royal Cypress Wetlands, Girl Scouts, SC Native Plant Society, GreenDrinks-Beaufort, and Port Royal Baptist Church.

***Conservation Education of the Year – Primary Level (K-6)*****Tim Taylor, Greenville County**

Tim Taylor has been the Natural Science and Environmental Science Chair for the Roper Mountain Science Center in Greenville for the past 23 years. However, Tim has been active with conservation education since the early 80's when he served as a Naturalist for state and national parks. After which, he became the District Scout Executive for the Blue Ridge Council teaching conservation programs and lessons for earning merit badges.

At the center, Tim develops and teaches conservation classes for students in 1st through 7th grades and partners with local experts, like staff from the Greenville Soil and Water Conservation District, to ensure conservation lessons and labs are relevant and accurate. In addition to his role with the Roper Mountain Science Center, Tim is actively engaged with the EEASC, Blue Ridge Council, Upstate SC Native Plant Society, among other critical conservation organizations. He also educates educators through his role at the center by hosting teaching workshops. Tim's approach to education is hands-on, inquiry based, child-led learning using tools like Enviroscares, stream tables, and rainfall simulators. This hands-on approach exemplifies Tim's dedication and impact on both the youth and adults that he serves.

***Conservation Educator of the Year – Secondary Level (7-12)*****Kirstin Bullington, Richland County**

Kirstin Bullington has been teaching for 21 years and remains very active in her field being co-author to many recent publications, attending and presenting at workshops, conferences, and trainings, and receiving awards such as the SC Green Step School award in 2023 and the 2022 S.C. STEM Educator of the Year by S.C. Tech. Under Kirstin's mentorship, students from the Richland Two Institution of Innovation won an electric school bus worth \$300,000 through an essay contest. Kirstin also mentored a team of students through the Lemelson-MIT Program that invented a new modular solar power system which received a US patent in 2023.

Kirstin's approach to conservation education is very hands-on and focuses on real life scenarios that the students are allowed to choose - frequently centering around climate change and environmental concerns. She believes students do their best work when they know their solutions can be applied to real-world problems. Regardless of the problems identified, every energy project has a connection to energy conservation. As student cohort interests vary, Kirstin's classroom has been fortunate to receive significant community support from environmental engineers, Green Steps Schools mentors, and local grant funding for projects ranging from pilot battery recycling initiatives to container gardening.

Kirstin states, "Although I am not a traditional conservation educator, I think I am able to contribute to conservation efforts nonetheless by equipping my students with the technical skills needed to create their solutions, and by empowering them to see themselves as being capable of creating a more sustainable future".

# Wednesday, January 24, 2024

7:00 am	<b>Breakfast</b> <i>Hotel Breakfast Area</i>
<b>General Session III</b> <i>Kensington G</i>	
8:00 am – 8:30 am	<b>Beaufort SWCD and TNC Partnership</b> David Bishop, The Nature Conservancy
8:30 am – 9:15 am	<b>Leadership Training Opportunities</b> Ben Setzler (Newberry), Lee Newman (Sumter), Margaret Harrison (Greenville), Alex Kostyk (Anderson) and Mike Stewart (Greenville)
9:15 am – 9:45 am	<b>NACD Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kenny Mullis, Southeast NACD Vice Chair</li> <li>• Mark Masters, NACD Treasurer</li> </ul>
9:45 am – 10:00 am	<b>Break</b>
10:00 am – 10:45 am	<b>SCACD Area Caucus Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edisto-Savannah Valley: Yvonne Kling, Area Director <i>Kensington A</i></li> <li>• Pee Dee: Justin Woodard, Area Director <i>Kensington B</i></li> <li>• East Piedmont: Joe Ghent, Area Director <i>Kensington C</i></li> <li>• West Piedmont: Mike Stewart, Area Director <i>Kensington G</i></li> </ul>
10:45 am – 12:00 pm	<b>SCACD Business Session</b> Presiding: Jeff Wilson, SCACD President <i>Kensington G</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Caucus Reports</li> <li>• Adoption of 2023 Policy Positions</li> <li>• New Business</li> <li>• Election of SCACD Officers</li> </ul>

# UPCOMING DATES

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## **2024 SC Envirothon Coach's Training**

February 3, 2024  
Sandhill REC – Columbia, SC

## **2024 Palmetto Sportmen's Classic**

March 22 – March 24, 2024  
State Fairgrounds – Columbia, SC

## **2024 Conservation Districts Day at the Statehouse**

March 5, 2024  
SC Statehouse Grounds – Columbia, SC

## **2024 SC Envirothon Competition**

April 26, 2024  
Sandhill REC – Columbia, SC

## **2024 Stewardship Week**

*"May the forest be with you always"*  
April 28 – May 4, 2024

## **2024 Southeast Region NACD Meeting**

June 16-18, 2024  
Gainesville, Florida



Photography – Andrew Busbee, SCDNR

Program Design – Kieran Ash, SCDNR