

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020



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## 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



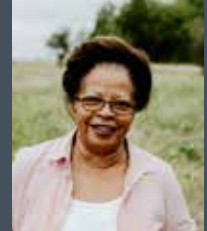
**Brett Tankersley**  
Vice-Chairman



**Danny Howard**  
Treasurer



**Dr. Robert Hanley**  
Commissioner



**Margaret Harrison**  
Commissioner

## A Message from the Chairman

It may be a bit of a cliché to talk about 2020 in hindsight when it was a year of challenges on so many levels.

Fortunately, the staff of the Greenville County SWCD has handled the strain of a pandemic with courage and fortitude. We are happy to announce a new addition to our staff. Chaneen Haler is the new community relations coordinator for the district office. She came to us with a storied and strong history of community work with Sustaining Way. Within the seven months of her tenure with the district, amid a pandemic, she has a proven record of getting conservation dollars on the ground.

I would like to say how proud I am of Commissioner Howard on being recognized at the Partnership conference that was held in February in Charleston South Carolina. Danny was deservedly awarded the Outstanding Commissioner of the year. Commissioner Howard, from the bottom of my heart I want to thank you for your many years of service to the citizens of South Carolina. You are a true leader who serves with a servant's heart and we are grateful for you.

As my tenure of being a Commissioner and the Chairman for this year has come to an end, I was pleased to nominate Commissioner Michal Stewart to be the Commissioner Chair. Commissioner Stewart has a real heart to serve the community and has spent a large amount of volunteer time meeting with folks from the Greenville community to listen to their needs and work to serve partnerships we serve as a group. We were also pleased to see Commissioner Margaret Harrison was voted in by the residents of Greenville County and look forward to her serving in this role.

Just as a farmer's work is never done we look forward to each opportunity to further assist our community. Please know that you are welcome to any Commission meeting (usually held on the second Tuesday of the month). You can also keep up with us on our social media pages as well as our District website.

Yours in conservation,  
*Bruce Countryman*  
Chair



# From Our District Manager



Hello friends!

It's been a year unlike any other in so many ways. Of course the primary difference was Covid-19 because it changed everything about what we do. I am so proud of commissioners and staff for adapting quickly and efficiently to new ways. Commissioners transitioned to Zoom meetings which allowed the Board to conduct business safely while allowing the public to attend. Safety protocols in the office were implemented and we worked as a team to ensure that we all stayed healthy.

We realized early on that we needed different ways to inform and educate in Greenville County without our usual face-to-face contact. We produced multiple new videos, created online classes and stepped up our Social Media game dramatically. We even showed a movie about sustainable ag at an outdoor venue to further our message in a fun way.

All of this allowed us to reach new people and our followers have grown steadily. Many of the tricks and technologies we learned will be continued long after Covid retreats to a distant memory (hopefully soon).

We appreciate you and are glad you are with us in this journey of both learning and educating. Keep in touch and let us know how we are doing. We are here for you!

Healthy soils to you!

*Kirsten Robertson*

Manager

## Championing Greenville's Growers

The Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District was established 82 years ago to support NRCS and help local farmers. With the urbanization in the county it has become more important than ever to ensure a robust food infrastructure for our citizens. This year the District made the important decision to support the County's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan, specifically the brand-new portion promoting agriculture and food security.

We began working with the County Planning Division to ensure that farmers have a seat at the table in County government in decisions that affect them. We developed a farmer survey to find out if any existing ordinances negatively affected farmers and sent a letter of support to County Council regarding a new ordinance that allows a Trust to protect agricultural, natural and culturally important lands in the county. For on-the-ground support, the District gratefully received a no-till drill and roller/crimper from Save Our Saluda through a SCDHEC 319 grant. This will be available for lease to farmers this coming summer.

We continue to support farmers in any way we can, and we look forward to what the next 82 years will bring!



# Community Corner

Article by Chaneen Haler, GCSWCD Community Relations Coordinator



## Virtual Education and Engagement

New approaches to sharing our messages provided us with many growth opportunities this year. Notably, our social media presence has become more purposeful. Internal strategic planning has led us to seek out content that shares important and relevant information with our followers. Our virtual community has steadily grown and we are proud to provide them with high quality content. Follow us @gcsoilandwater on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter

This year we debuted a new video series titled 'Nature's Recipe'. In this ongoing series, Kirsten Robertson, GCSWCD Manager, shows us how growing native plants can provide us with a year-round harvest. Additionally, we created videos complementing the Seed Library program, and began to develop a Stormwater related series titled 'Pollution Solutions'. Look for more on that in the coming year!

## Partnerships

Collaboration has always been an essential part of our work, and this year was no different. Though the format was different this year, we are still able to celebrate outreach that resulted in continued programming and innovation across Greenville County.

## Roper Mountain Science Center

In the spirit of supporting new opportunities, we worked closely with Roper Mountain Science Center, and the South Carolina Forest and Grazing Lands Coalition to provide RMSC Natural Science staff with rainfall simulators and infiltration demonstration equipment. With guidance from Kirsten and Chaneen, the staff was able to use these tools in a variety of their virtual lessons. To date, more than 500 Greenville County students have attended those lessons. In the future, these models will be housed in the beautiful new Environmental Science and Sustainability Building as part of an interactive demonstration.

# Seed Library

## Seed Library Partnership Grows!

2020 was quite a year for the Seed Library program! We started the year out with a series of Pop-Up Seed Library events at local library branches. The onset of closings and limited access to the physical Seed Library prompted our team to look for alternative ways to get seeds to citizens. We created and executed a mailing system that allowed us to safely get seeds to eager Greenville gardeners. In 2020, we distributed nearly 20,000 seed packets and more than half of those were sent via mail.

One of the best parts of the Seed Library partnerships are the educational opportunities we're able to offer. The Greenville Master Gardeners helped host educational events at the beginning of the year – teaching free workshops on gardening basics. Through the Greenville County Library Systems' Virtual Education efforts, we also provided guidance on growing microgreens and indoor herb gardening. All of the virtual content can be found in the Gardening & Sustainability playlist on the library's YouTube channel, @GreenvilleLibrary.

Pop-Up Seed Libraries returned in August with additional safety measures. It was a joy to see our patrons and distribute seeds. We even partnered with Friends of the Library to sell Gardening books and t-shirts. This year's programming was supported by Duke Energy's Local Impact Grant. We are grateful for their generosity.

### Looking ahead

Berea's Library branch is re-opened and we are proud to continue to provide free access to seeds for all library card holders. We'll be hosting Pop-Up Seed Libraries across the county from February – March and again in August. We'll also debut our 'Mini Seed Library' in the coming year! The Bookmobile will bring a selection of seed packets along to rural parts of Greenville County.

Upcoming workshops and information about the seed library can be found at: [www.greenvillelibrary.org/seed-library](http://www.greenvillelibrary.org/seed-library)



# Affiliate Membership

Since 1971, citizens, businesses, and educational institutions in Greenville County have donated tax deductible gifts to the Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District. The District uses affiliate member funds to provide a wide variety of environmental education programs, demonstration projects, and outdoor learning opportunities.

District education programs reach students of all ages, classroom teachers, informal educators, pet owners, homeowners, farmers, contractors, members of the public, and elected officials.

We need your help to continue these important programs!

- Awards for Greenville County students for photographs, science projects, and essays written on natural resource conservation topics
- Interactive exhibit displays at area events, fairs, and Earth Day celebrations
- Funding for mini-grants to schools and organizations for conservation education

## A Heartfelt Thank You To Our Affiliate Members

**We appreciate your ongoing support through this challenging year!**

South Carolina DNR

Clemson University

ReWa - Renewable Water Resources

Mountain View Farm

Nature Walk Photography

Pecan Dale Farmstead

Padula's Plants and Gardens

John W. Parris

Dennis & Judy DeFrancisco

# Commissioner Honored

## Danny Howard Named SCACD Commissioner of the Year

We are proud to announce that Commissioner Danny Howard was named the 2020 Commissioner of the Year by the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts at the Annual Partnership Conference held in February in Charleston. Commissioner Howard has promoted conservation on our board for 17 years and currently serves as Secretary/Treasurer.



Commissioner Howard goes above and beyond to support District programming in Greenville County. He attends most education events and even volunteers to be our live action “Poop Fairy”! (The resemblance is uncanny!)

A well deserved honor. Congratulations Commissioner Howard!



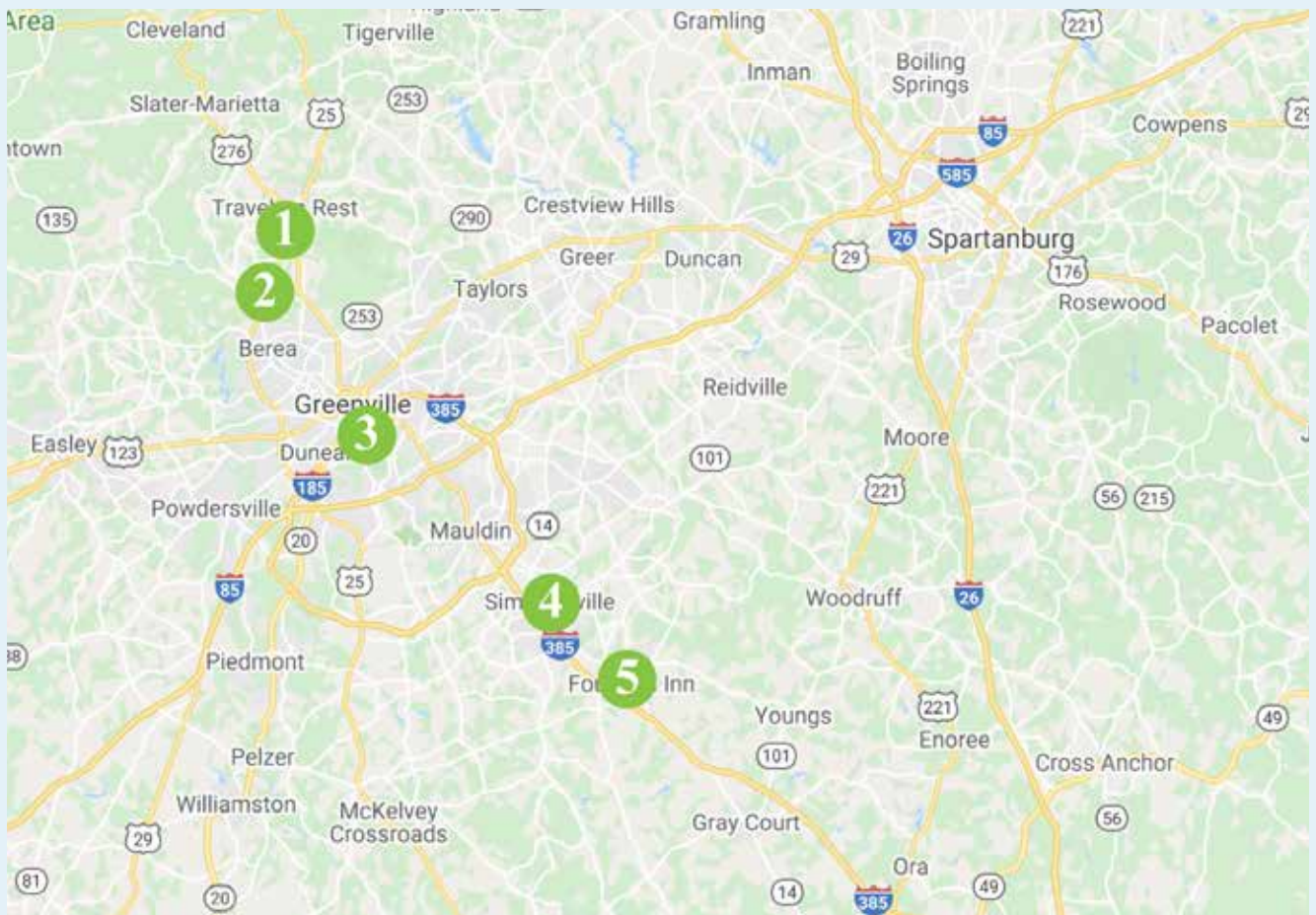


# Storm Drain Art

In 2020, Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District worked with artists to transform six storm drains into public works of art. In addition to their artistic value, painted storm drains serve as important educational tools to address stormwater pollution and the common misconception that our storm drains lead to sewer treatment facilities. In reality, anything that enters a storm drain goes directly into the nearest river, lake, or stream without being treated. This includes litter, auto fluids, yard chemicals, pet waste, and other pollutants.

Five artists were selected to paint six murals in Berea, Greenville, Travelers Rest, Simpsonville, and Fountain Inn. Take a tour of the finished pieces!

## Mural Locations





1



**Location: Sarah Dobey Jones Library, Berea**

Artist: Jessica Lancaster

[jessicalancasterdesign.com](http://jessicalancasterdesign.com) | [@jessicalancasterdesign](https://www.instagram.com/jessicalancasterdesign)

2



**Location: Trailblazer Park, Traveler's Rest**

Artist: Elizabeth Kinney

[elizabethkinneyart.com](http://elizabethkinneyart.com) | [@oldoceaneyes](https://www.instagram.com/oldoceaneyes)

3



**Location: Caine-Halter YMCA, Greenville (two murals)**

Artist: Abigail Williams

[@artby\\_abbyw](https://www.instagram.com/artby_abbyw)

4



**Location: Trade Street & South Main, Simpsonville**

Artist: Morgan Mattson

[morganmattsonceramics.com](http://morganmattsonceramics.com)

[@morganmattsonceramics](https://www.instagram.com/morganmattsonceramics)



**Location: Fountain Inn Farmer's Market, Fountain Inn**

Artist: Diksha Chandanshive

[@artsywishh](https://www.instagram.com/artsywishh)

# Meet Our Staff

## USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

From left: **Lynne Newton**, District Conservationist,  
**Collin Buckner**, Soil Conservationist, **Drew Williams**, DNR Program Coordinator



## Soil and Water Conservation District Staff

From left: **Kirsten Robertson**, District Manager,  
**Lynn Pilewski**, Community Relations Coordinator, **Chaneen Haler**, Community Relations Coordinator



### Staff Directory

Kirsten Robertson	District Manager	864-920-6404
Lynn Pilewski	Community Relations Coordinator	864-920-6397
Shelby Cohen	Community Relations Coordinator	864-920-6401
Lynne Newton	NRCS District Conservationist	864-920-6402
Collin Buckner	NRCS Soil Conservationist	864-920-6396
Drew Williams	DNR Program Coordinator	864-920-6403

**Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District**  
301 University Ridge, Suite 4800  
Greenville, SC 29601  
864-467-2755  
[www.greenvillesoilandwater.com](http://www.greenvillesoilandwater.com)

# 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, \$ 70,370.00 of CSP and EQIP dollars obligated covering 1,078 acres of cropland, forestland and pastureland in Greenville county.

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.





**GREENVILLE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
301 University Ridge, Suite 4800  
Greenville, SC 29601

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**PLEASE DELIVER TO:**

Upcoming Events

