

# Chesterfield Soil & Water Conservation District Annual Report

2014  
Chesterfield County



## *Non-Profit Organization*

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## *Board of Commissioners*

*Dwight Johnson – Chairman*

*Billy Jenkins – Vice Chairman*

*William Griggs – Secretary/Treasurer*

*Roger Smith – Commissioner*

*Jack Hurst – Commissioner*

All programs and services of the Chesterfield SWCD are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, handicap or marital status.

## *2013 Farmer of the Year*



*Maria Kendall, center, was named 2013 Conservation Farmer of the Year. Pictured with Kendall from left to right are Kendall's son, John, and SWCD Chairman Dwight Johnson.*

Every year, the Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District recognizes a Conservation Farmer of the Year. The recipient is chosen based on the best management practices they use to manage their properties. Good conservationists have a primary goal of protecting our natural resources.

In 2006, Maria Kendall assumed responsibility for roughly 1,500 acres of property when she lost her husband "Buck" Kendall to cancer. At first she was unsure of exactly what she needed to do, because in her own words, "I was only peripherally involved in Buck's original planning."

By working with consulting forester Jason Kiker, they have continued the conservation dream that Buck had in 1987 when he started purchasing land to manage.

Maria maintains a comprehensive forest management plan that encompasses all of her properties and goals. The plan and goals match the site and species on each tract, with consideration given to soil types, drains and any wetlands that exist.

District Conservationist Charles Babb worked with Buck and now works with Maria to provide information on conservation plans and federal programs. "Buck had a dream of being a tree farmer," commented Babb. "And now, Maria has successfully made that dream into her own."

Active forest managers like Maria keep an eye on which stands of timber are rotating into a thinning or harvesting period. Then, as the market is high for those products, bids are accepted for thinning or clearcutting.

In addition to harvesting, Maria uses practices such as aerial and ground herbicide applications for pre-planting site preparation as well as to manage any unwanted hardwoods or invasive species in her timber.

Ms. Kendall may not have initially chosen to be a conservationist, but she has certainly embraced the very essence of what it means to be one. And while we often do not think of a forest manager as a typical farmer, their conservation efforts are no less important.

When Maria Kendall accepted her Chesterfield Soil and Water 2013 Conservation Farmer of the Year, she did so in honor of her husband. She gratefully acknowledged many that helped her become the steward that she is today, and looks forward continuing Buck's vision in the years to come.

## *NEW FACE at the Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District*

The Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership and the Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) welcomed new hire Jimmy Lisenby to coordinate all Partnership activities beginning April 2, 2014.

Born and raised in Chesterfield, Lisenby began working with the South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) as a nursery manager near Sumter in 1995 after graduating from Clemson University. In 2005 he transferred to the SCFC nursery in Trenton, SC. During his tenure as nursery manager and tree improvement horticulturist with the SCFC, he was responsible for growing and selling native understory species and a variety of trees, including hardwoods, loblolly and longleaf pines.

“Jimmy’s extensive experience with landowners, longleaf and native understory species made him a perfect fit for this position,” said previous Partnership chairman Wayne Harris.

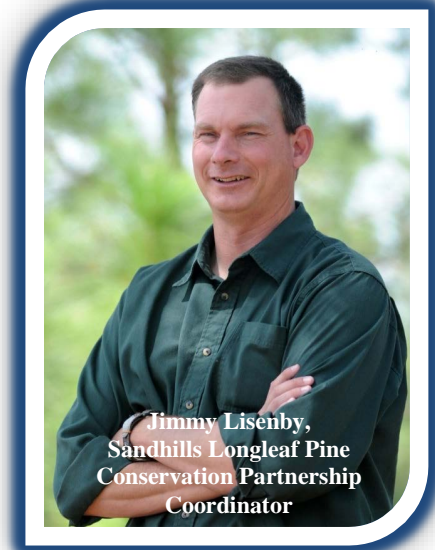
Funding for Lisenby’s position was obtained from a \$150,000 grant awarded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and is administered by the Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District. The grant will also cost share on 1000 acres of prescribed burning and 25 acres of native understory planting.

Lisenby will be coordinating all Partnership activities including working with landowners and the administration of two previous grants, both of which focused on the establishment of longleaf pine trees. “Combined with USDA-NRCS contracts, we have written cost share agreements to plant longleaf on nearly 8,000 acres since 2010,” commented USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist Charles Babb. “With Jimmy and our additional funding for prescribed burning, we have new tools in our longleaf management toolbox for our landowners.”

“I am excited to work with landowners interested in planting and managing longleaf on their property,” commented Lisenby who estimates he has grown over 30 million longleaf seedlings since 1995. “And now I’m getting to work with landowners as they restore the longleaf ecosystem with trees that I likely had in my nursery.”

Lisenby returns to Chesterfield with his wife and two daughters.

For more information on the Partnership or cost share assistance for landowners interested in establishing or maintaining longleaf on the property, please call 843-623-2187 x 3 or visit [www.chesterfieldswcd.com/longleaf](http://www.chesterfieldswcd.com/longleaf)



**Jimmy Lisenby,**  
Sandhills Longleaf Pine  
Conservation Partnership  
Coordinator

## **Sandhill Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership (SLPCP) UPDATE**

Sandhills Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership (SLPCP) continues to help private landowners in Chesterfield County and northwestern Darlington County with Longleaf habitat restoration efforts.

In July of 2014, a Prairie Habitats pull-type seed harvester and Grasslander Seeder™ were purchased for the SLPCP using funds from a



National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant. This particular grant focuses on cost share for landowners to help burn 1,000 acres of longleaf pine, restore 25 acres of native ground cover as well as provide funding for the Partnership Coordinator position. Prescribed fire and the presence of the plants that make up the native ground cover are both essential for a healthy longleaf ecosystem. A prescribed burn can manage competing vegetation, reduce fuels that can cause wildfires, control disease, and promote favorable wildlife habitat. A healthy understory consist of plants that are adapted to frequent burns and that help to carry fire through a longleaf stand. In November, native ecotype longleaf understory species seed collection began with the use of the Prairie Habitats seed harvester. Lynn Askins and Mark Parker with the Carolina Sandhills Wildlife Refuge were very helpful in locating suitable collections sites on the Refuge. Collection efforts were focused on wiregrass stands in open longleaf forests with a history

of fire and a large diversity of native understory species. The Prairie Habitats seed harvester worked very well. In just a few days the seed harvester was used to collect close to 100 pounds of mixed seed. This mix included important longleaf ecosystem species seed such as wiregrass, little bluestem, splitbeard bluestem, as well as several Asters and Liatris species. This seed will be offered to private landowners within the SLPCP’s focus area to plant using the Grasslander Seeder™ this spring.



## 2014 Poster / Photo Contest



The SWCD holds an annual poster/photo contest for the schools in Chesterfield County. The contest topic is chosen to be informative and an educational environmental topic. In 2014, the topic was Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil. This contest peaks the students interest about our environment, so they really give their all. Winners receive awards and are recognized in the local newspapers. First place winners go on to the State and then the National Contest. It's really an extensive contest.

Our youth are the future, and we hope to continue educating the future generations.

### 2014 Poster/Photo Contest Winners



Shown, from left to right, are Robbie Kessler, Katelyn Blackwell, Timothy Branham, India Isaac, Shaniya Thomas, Anna McDaniel, Bethany Funderburk, Emily McDaniel, Zoe Fedorchuk, Petrina A. Little, Joshua Little, Zachary Tremblay, and Derrick Snow. Several winners were unable to attend the recognition day. Not shown are winners Caleb Henson, Tanner Chapman, Rodreos Phillips, Brianna Ludlum, Steven Buie, Xavier Chapman, and Caitlin Geyer.

## *SC Commissioner's School of Agriculture*



Each summer, top high school juniors and seniors from around the country gather together for a week at Clemson University to learn about the diverse industries of agriculture and natural resources. We annually sponsor a Chesterfield County student to attend this prestigious program.

Participants attend academic tours and presentations as well as conduct laboratories and research projects. This is a life changing experience and we are fortunate to be able to offer this honor to one lucky student.

Pictured Left; 2014 SCCSA participants Victoria Hicks and Allisa Horton at "The Rock" at the Clemson University Football Stadium.

## Outreach at the 2014 CarolinaFest in Chesterfield, SC



Not only did we have a great day interacting with friends, we were able to meet and talk with lots of folks interested in Longleaf! We had many informational pamphlets about all the programs we have going on through the NRCS & SWCD. The local residents could also participate in our annual raffle by just submitting their name and contact information, with a chance to win a bag full of goodies.

Special thanks to SWCD Employee Heather Rivers and NRCS employee Sue Griggs for putting together all of our promotional stuff! Coordinator Jimmy Lisenby and Commissioner William Griggs spent the day answering questions about the SWCD or SLPCP.

## Farm Day at Edwards Elementary School



The Chesterfield SWCD, SLPCP, and USDA-NRCS joined a host of others to help Edwards Elementary School hold their first ever "Farm Day".

Every student (over 500) at Edwards Elementary, parent helpers and teacher's visited a variety of stations, including stops at the Partnership's and the Soil and Water Conservation District's tables.

Partnership Coordinator Jimmy Lisenby used burning photos (provided by Susan Griggs Photography), longleaf pine cones, posters and other items to demonstrate and discuss the forestry practices pertaining to longleaf pines.

In addition, each student received a longleaf seedling to take home, which were donated by Bodenhamer Nursery.

In preparation for farm day, students and faculty were encouraged to research facts about farming and to dress like a farmer. So, we were very impressed by their knowledge of farming in general.

This program was a great success, and the students were able to learn about several aspects of the farming industry for South Carolina.

Other participating groups included Clemson Extension, Carolina Eastern, Rivers and Sons Farms, Teal Farms, Mills Farm, Middle Sparrow Ranch and Sellers Produce.





## SLPCP Obtains Grant

The Sandhill Longleaf Pine Conservation Partnership (SLPCP), in conjunction with the Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD), was recently awarded a \$150,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Funds from the grant have been used to hire a partnership coordinator, purchase seed planting and collection equipment, and hold an intensive Longleaf 101 course for local landowners.

Additionally, funds will be used to cost-share prescribed burning on 1,000 acres of private landowner property in the Chesterfield and Darlington county focus area.

Partnership Coordinator Jimmy Lisenby explained the importance of using fire to manage longleaf. “Longleaf has a great relationship with fire,” said Lisenby, “Fire promotes the native understory that we associate with the historical longleaf forest.”

Native grasses such as wiregrass, Indian grass and bluestems will begin to repopulate a longleaf forest that is managed with prescribed fire. Over time, flowering plants will begin to emerge, and eventually the quail and turkey will begin to use the areas again.

“Many landowners are wary of using fire in their forests,” commented USDA-District Conservationist Charles Babb. “But, in reality what they are afraid of is a wildfire.” Babb explained that prescribed fires in a forest will actually reduce the chances of an unplanned out-of-control wildfire because the fuel to carry a fire is reduced by periodic burning.

“Landowners are also reluctant to burn because they are afraid of damaging their young longleaf,” commented Lisenby, “and there are definitely right and wrong ways to burn.” Lisenby explained that using a certified prescribed fire manager to plan and execute a burn is important. “Certified fire managers have been trained in smoke management, fire weather and fire safety, and must conduct five burns before they are issued a certification.”

The Partnership is currently accepting applications from landowners wanting to be considered for cost-share assistance for prescribed burning. In addition, any landowners interested in renting the small, no-till planter to establish native grasses and pollinator areas should also contact the CSWCD at (843) 623-2187, ext. 3. More information can also be found on the district website, [www.chesterfieldswcd.com/longleaf](http://www.chesterfieldswcd.com/longleaf).



## USDA-NRCS Update

The Chesterfield USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) had an active 2014 fiscal year, accepting over 80 applications across all Farm Bill programs.

District Conservationist Charles Babb and Technician Sue Griggs wrote 34 contracts totaling \$475,000 which encompassed nearly 3,000 acres.

Contracts included forestry practices such as site preparation and longleaf tree planting, prescribed fire and firebreaks.

Livestock practices included installing fence, wells and water tanks and forage planting.

Technical assistance was additionally provided to landowners and managers which resulted in improved soil health and water quality on 13,000 acres.

“We have a busy field office,” explained Babb. “On any day, we may work with an organic farmer, livestock owner or a family with a tract of land they want to reforest with longleaf pine.”

The Chesterfield NRCS office estimates it offered cost-share assistance on roughly three miles of pipeline, 28 water tanks and nearly five miles of cross-fencing to enhance rotational grazing for livestock. Additionally, 2,000 acres were established in longleaf pine.

For more information on the NRCS office, contact:

[Charles.Babb@sc.usda.gov](mailto:Charles.Babb@sc.usda.gov) or 843-623-2187 x3.



## *Help Us, Help the People, Help the Land!*

The people of Chesterfield County are fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources. Those resources will not last forever unless they are used wisely. That is where we come in, and in order for us to step in, we need YOU.

Affiliate Members are a vital part of our conservation team! Without monetary support given from Affiliate Members, we would not be able to carry out the many programs needed to promote conservation within the county.

*YOU can be instrumental in helping conserve  
Chesterfield County's natural resources!*



*All Affiliate Members are listed on our website @  
[www.chesterfieldswcd.com](http://www.chesterfieldswcd.com).*

*Please cut and mail in this section, with your tax deductible financial contribution, to 106 Scotch Rd. Chesterfield, SC 29709. Thank You!*

### ***Affiliate Membership Categories***

<b>Up to \$24—Regular Membership</b>	<b><i>You Will Receive.....</i></b>	<b>Affiliate Membership Certificate</b>
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<b>\$250 to \$499—Diamond Membership</b>		<b>Framed Affiliate Membership Certificate</b>
<b>\$500 + —Corporate Membership</b>		<b>Framed Affiliate Membership Certificate</b>

*Make all checks payable to: Chesterfield SWCD*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_