

The Pee Dee Progress

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SERVING THE COUNTIES OF
CHESTERFIELD DARLINGTON DILLON MARION MARLBORO

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Blenheim Outdoor Classroom/Nature Center

The Pee Dee Resource Conservation and Development Council is providing assistance to the Blenheim, SC Primary/Elementary School Complex in the development of a Nature Center. This Project is funded by an Urban and Community Forestry Grant from the SC Forestry Commission. Other financial contributors include the Town of Blenheim, and the Marlboro Soil and Water Conservation District. Contributors of in-kind materials and services include the Marlboro County Public Works Department, the Marlboro Unit of the SC Forestry Commission, Evans Correctional Facility, Willimatte Industries, the Marlboro Field Staff of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Faculty and Staff of the Marlboro School District, The Blenheim Parent Teacher Organization, and community citizens. Several employees of the Blenheim facility of International Paper Corporation have been involved in the recent construction of boardwalks for crossing streams and wetlands along the developing nature trail.



**Planting the Arboretum
Students, Faculty, Staff, and Volunteers**



**Will Arthur, Mike Branyon, Jerry Blue, and
Danny Driggers during boardwalk construction.**

In addition to the *Nature Trail* and *Boardwalks*, current plans for the site include a nature pond also known as a *Green Tree Reservoir*. This pond will provide a shallow water habitat for migrating water fowl, as well as habitat for numerous aquatic species of wildlife and will facilitate the enhancement of existing wetland vegetation. Other facilities to be constructed on the site include a *Pavilion/Shelter* to serve as an outdoor class setting, and an *Amphitheater* for use by school organizations. Earlier this year School Staff and volunteers gather for several work days during which the *Nature Trail* was established and an *Arboretum* was established by the planting of various trees and shrubs including four fourteen foot tall Palmetto Trees. Everyone is encouraged to visit the project website where numerous photos of the progress to date are available. <http://pdrcd.tripod.com/BODClass.html>

Thompson Creek TMDL Project

A TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) establishes the maximum allowable pollutant loading for a waterbody, allocates that load among pollutant contributors, and provides a basis for taking actions needed to restore water quality. This Project will develop a TMDL for the Thompson Creek watershed above highway S-13-243 in Chesterfield County. The first objective of this project will be to evaluate the role of land use as a major factor in nonpoint source runoff. Once a detailed characterization and assessment of fecal coliform bacteria contributions to the Thompson Creek watershed above highway S-13-243 have been completed, an evaluation of land use management and nonpoint source allocations on fecal coliform bacteria trends will be conducted. The project will then develop a stakeholder consensus on the watershed management and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for fecal coliform. Future nonpoint source implementation activities in the watershed should be based on the recommended loading alternative. This project is funded by a grant to the Pee Dee RC&D, in cooperation with the Town of Chesterfield and the Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District. Funding is from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control through the US Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act Section 319.

Constructed Wetland Project

Natural wetland areas are recognized for their ability to remove impurities from water as it passes through these areas. Waste management specialists are taking what occurs naturally in our environment and adapting the concept to treat wastewater in agri-industry; factories and businesses, and even in a local, residential setting. One of these applications is being tested in Marlboro County. The residence has continually experienced problems with a failed septic tank system because the soils are poorly drained. Through a grant sponsored by the Pee Dee Resource Conservation and Development Council, a subsurface flow constructed wetlands system has been installed at the residence. Effluent samples are being taken on a monthly basis to determine the effectiveness of constructed wetlands in reducing pollutants from household sewage water. In a cooperative effort, the monthly samples are taken by personnel from the S.C. Department of Natural Resources with lab testing conducted by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. Seven similar sites are being monitored throughout South Carolina over an eighteen month period. It is hoped that with positive test results, constructed wetlands can be adapted for use as an environmentally safe alternative to failed septic systems.



Construction 1999

Summer of 2000



POWER for Wildlife

POWER for Wildlife is a rights-of-way management campaign designed to create new wildlife habitat beneath electrical transmission lines. RC&D Councils are coordinating this project with Electric power companies and electric cooperatives who are funding the project in South Carolina. The project works by offering cash grants and professional wildlife management advice to groups and individuals committed to five years of rights-of-way management. Landowners, hunting clubs, wildlife organizations, and other individuals committed to the conservation and management of power rights-of-way in South Carolina may apply for a grant. Eleven grants were administered by the Pee Dee RC&D this year. Applications are available at your local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation District offices.

The Pee Dee Geographic Information System Project

Digital spatial data representing farm landowner property boundaries and farm field boundaries are being developed through a cooperative effort of the *Pee Dee RC&D*, The *University of South Carolina*, The *Natural Resources Conservation Service*, The *Farm Service Agency* and the local County Governments. In addition a digital *Decision Support System for the Siting of Animal Waste Facilities* is being developed. This effort is being led by the *Earth Sciences and Resources Institute* of The *University of South Carolina* with primary funding through a congressional grant from Senator Earnest Hollings. The spatial data layers have been completed for Marion County and are available for use in the USDA Service Center in Marion and also on the website. <http://129.252.95.10/isa/marion/>



Currently work is progressing in the development of the spatial data layers for Marlboro County with a projected completion date of December 2000. Project plans are to accelerate this effort and hopefully complete the work in Chesterfield, Darlington, and Dillon Counties next year. By using this data in conjunction with digital aerial photos and conservation practice location data captured from a global positioning system, the development of site plans is accomplished more easily with greater accuracy. This effort allows the field staffs of the Conservation Partnership to provide better service to the citizens of the Pee Dee Area.

Pee Dee Land Trust

The Pee Dee Resource Conservation and Development Council has sponsored the organization of the Pee Dee Land Trust which is a private nonprofit corporation with the purpose of conserving important lands for public benefit. This is accomplished by working cooperatively with landowners to accept donations of property, buying property or helping establish legal restrictions such as conservation easements. A Land Trust works to conserve lands with natural, historic, or recreational value. Once a landowner has entered into a conservation program with the Land Trust, the Trust then monitors the easement for compliance with the restrictions and intentions specified by the landowner. We sometimes take for granted the outdoor recreational activities associated with hunting, fishing, canoeing, hiking and bird watching, and the quality of life that goes with them. Landowners have options to protect their way of life, and the Land Trust can help landowners identify and evaluate those options. Solutions can be customized to the needs and preferences of the owner, so that the beauty, character and traditional use of the land remains. There are many options that can meet the specified needs of the landowner. Most approaches offer income, estate, and property tax relief. Qualified easements and donations benefit the landowner because



The Pee Dee Land Trust recently conducted a public seminar which attracted seventy-three participants. Mr. Ken Driggers of the *Palmetto Conservation Foundation* provided the evening's program.

they are treated as charitable gifts by the IRS. This can result in a tax deduction of up to 30% of the donor's adjusted gross income. Higher value easements and donations may carry over into subsequent years. Estate and property taxes are sometimes lowered, so future generations can keep family lands. Perhaps most importantly, protecting the family lands through the land trust ensures that a family legacy is kept intact. What is the value of the pleasure and contentment a family derives over the years from their land? Who can put a price on the peace of mind for parents when they know that their children can enjoy their land just as they did? Ultimately, the landowner determines the uses allowable on the property. Future generations can enjoy the land in ways that the landowner sees fit.

Darlington - Marlboro Beaver Control Project

The Pee Dee RC&D has assisted with coordinating the renewal of a cooperative agreement between the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Darlington/Marlboro Counties. This agreement provides the services of one full time trapper to assist private landowners in controlling the population of beavers in areas where they are creating nuisance situations and destroying valuable private timber resources. Bill Griffith has recently accepted this position and may be reached through the Public Works Department of either county.

Other Current Efforts

- Learning Tree Child Development Center - Grant application submitted for grounds improvement - Pending
- Pee Dee River Watershed Consortium Project – Grant application submitted to fund a *Watershed Coordinator* position - pending
- Lamar Sidewalk Project - Provided assistance with Clemson Extension for grant application - Approved for \$200,000
- Carolina Sandhills Wildlife Refuge - Grant application submitted for Unpaved Roads BMP Demo - Pending
- Marlboro High School Nature Center - Grant application submitted for establishment - Pending
- GIS Professional Development Training - Grant application submitted for training Partnership Staff - Pending
- Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. - Grant application submitted for ArcView software in SWCD offices - pending
- Water Storage Tanks for Dry Fire Hydrants - Project installation continuing
- Dry Fire Hydrants for Rural Fire Protection Phase II - Project installation completed this year

The Pee Dee RC&D is grateful to the local Conservation Partnership; including the NRCS Field Staff, the Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners and Staff, SC Department of Natural Resources Field Staff, and Citizen Volunteers. Without the support and efforts of the Partnership, many of these projects which we coordinate would not exist.

Pee Dee Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Incorporated Council Members

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All PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF THE PEE DEE RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREA COUNCIL ARE OFFERED ON A NONDISCRIMINATORY BASIS WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, COLOR NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, SEX, AGE, MARITAL STATUS OR HANDICAP.



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