

BERKELEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Winter 2025-2026



Our Mission

To be responsible to the citizens of the District in matters involving resource conservation. To promote the wise and responsible use of natural resources.

To develop and implement programs to protect and conserve soil, water, farmland, woodland, wildlife, energy and riparian and wetland resources.



Get to know us!!

COMMISSIONERS

Associate Commissioners



Diane Edwins
Chairperson



Barry Jurs
Commissioner



Lynn Curtis
Commissioner



Troy Diel
Commissioner



Nick Yoder
Commissioner



Keith Gourdin
Commissioner
Emeritus



Cliff Martin
Associate
Commissioner



Wade Wyndham
Associate
Commissioner



Ed Glover
Associate
Commissioner

Berkeley Soil and Water Conservation District is ushering in its **83rd** year of service to Berkeley County and its citizens. We would like to invite you to become an Affiliate Member in 2026 to help us continue the programs and the work we do to promote conservation and wise use of natural resources throughout our community.

Conservation Districts are a legal sub-division of state government that were created by law to provide community leadership in the conservation of the country's soil, water and other natural resources. The District is governed by five non-paid commissioners.

Berkeley Soil and Water Conservation District sponsors a variety of programs and projects that are aimed at stimulating the public's awareness of the need to conserve and preserve our natural resources.

Some of the projects created through the efforts of BSWCD include: the Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust, the County's Geographical Information System (GIS Mapping), "Wump World" (continuing education program for teachers), Berkeley Blueways Paddling Trails, the Cooper River channel markers, emergency watershed and drainage projects, **berkeleybees***, Firewise, community held seminars to educate landowners on resources available to them as well as various other educational programs, and along with our recreational and historical websites: *Berkely Outdoor Life, and ByGone Berkeley.*

The Berkeley Conservation District relies heavily on the tax deductible support of Affiliate members. Without your support many of our programs would not be possible.

If you have any questions about your Conservation District's work, please call 843-719-4146.
Your Support is greatly appreciated.

Our Staff and Partners



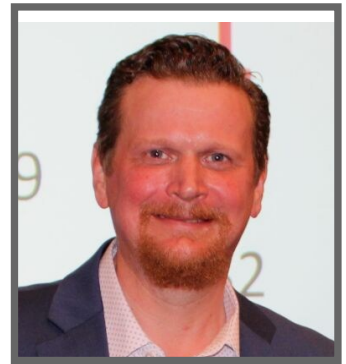
Jonathan James,
Berkeley County Land
Service Specialist



Kimberly Nolte,
BSWCD Manager of
District Operations



Ashleigh James,
District Conservationist,
NRCS



Scott Lynch, Blaze LLC
Creator of Berkeley Outdoor
Life and ByGone Berkeley

Nick Yoders' journey to Commissioner started in 2012 when he decided to go back to school at the University of Maryland to pursue a Masters in Landscape Architecture. His intent was to become a golf course designer, but over his tenure there he was drawn toward conservation and eventually changed his focus to wildlife habitat design on abandoned golf courses. After graduation he held several positions with AmeriCorps working in the field of forest management and invasive plant control.

He moved back to SC in 2017 and was hired by Berkeley County as the Naturalist at Cypress Gardens. He managed wildflower fields, learned to keep bees, built trails, and gave tours of the swamp by land and water.

In 2020 he accepted a different role with Berkeley County; Farm and Land Services Specialist. This role brought him into the circle of the Berkeley Soil and Water Conservation District. As a liaison between the County and the District, Nick worked on County-wide conservation projects, most notably continuing the legacy of the berkeleybees program and working with Commissioner Keith Gourdin on local history projects.

In 2024 he accepted the Greenbelt Program Manager position with the County. In this role, supported by funding through the 2022 one-cent sales tax referendum, he has worked to protect greenspaces for future public access including the North Island Project, Epsom Oaks in partnership with the Town of Moncks Corner, and the recently acquired Blessing Property in Huger. The District also presented him with the H.H. Harvey Award for Conservation for his local conservation efforts. Nick's term as Commissioner began in October of this year with the retirement of Commissioner Gourdin and is set to expire in January of 2027. Mr. Gourdin has been nominated for consideration for the honor of Commissioner Emeritus to the SCDNR Executive Board.





Major additions for the Berkeley Blueways just wrapped up this Fall with the addition of four (4) new exciting paddling trails. There are two new blueways on Lake Moultrie – *The Way Ditch* and *The Outer Banks*, one new blueway on Goose Creek Reservoir– *The North*, and one new blueway on Lake Marion – *Chimney Island*. Three of the four are considered easy and appropriate for beginners, while only *The Outer Banks* is rated moderate in difficulty. Check out these latest blueways, along with a total of 76 Blueways, Walkway and Bikeways at:

www.BerkeleyOutdoorLife.com



BSWCD—WORKING WITH YOU AND FOR YOU!



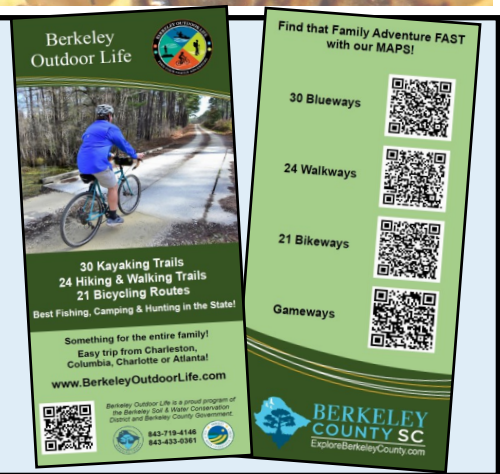
Berkeleybees* Meetings First Monday of Each Month
6pm in the Nesbitt House,
1004 Old Hwy 52, Moncks Corner, SC 29461
email Jonathan.James@berkeleycountysc.gov

Visit Berkeley Outdoor Life & ByGone Berkeley

Recreation Ideas,
Historical stories,
Old Churches,
Old Cemeteries
& More!!!



www.BerkeleyOutdoorLife.com



Scholarship Opportunities



The Berkeley Soil and Water Conservation District is offering **two \$1,000 Scholarships to graduating high school seniors or undergraduate college students** who are pursuing studies in natural resources, agriculture, conservation or forestry. The recipient must be a Berkeley County resident and the recipient's college/university must be accredited and in the state of South Carolina.

The deadline to apply for the 2026 Scholarships is March 31, 2026.

For Scholarship information or applications, please call **843-719-4146** or email at info@berkeleysoilandwater.com. Applications are also available on our website.

April 2026



Naturescope: Kids Who Care about our Environment



This annual event takes place every April, hosting young people from Berkeley County schools to learn about various outdoor/ environmental topics. **BSWCD hosts "What's Under My Feet?"** The students make their own soil tubes filled with layers of clay, sand and topsoil and are taught that different soils have different properties.

BERKELEY COUNTY ACQUIRES HISTORIC BLESSING PLANTATION IN HUGER

In partnership, Berkeley County and the Open Space Institute (OSI) have acquired historic Blessing Plantation property in Huger. The nearly 630-acre property will ultimately become a new county park— offering long-desired public access to fishing, kayaking, and a one-of-a-kind public experience on a former colonial rice plantation.

The property, located at 101 Blessing Lane, consists of two adjoining parcels totaling approximately 628 acres. It was acquired by OSI and Berkeley County in November for \$15.2 million. Over the next two years, OSI will hold a portion of the property and lease it to the County, eventually donating the entire property to the County.

The project is being funded by the Berkeley County Greenbelt Program, established through the One Cent Sale Tax referendum voters approved in November 2022, along with the following additional partners:

- South Carolina Conservation Bank/Open Space Institute: **\$7,400,000**
- Berkeley County Greenbelt Program: **\$5,800,000**
- Lowcountry Land Trust: **\$2,000,000**
- Donated value/bargain sale offered by des Francs family: **\$5,220,000**

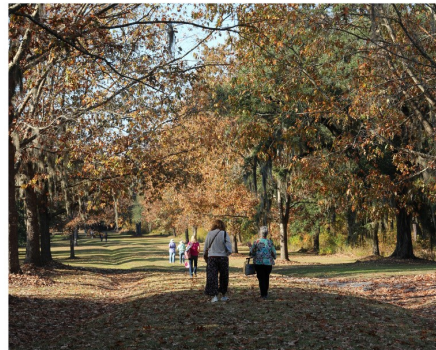
Blessing Plantation boasts one mile of waterfront property along French Quarter Creek, close to where it feeds into the East Branch of the Cooper River. It also has an existing dock and four dwelling structures—one of which is a historic mid-19th century home. The larger parcel is primarily wooded with access roads and a historic African American church and adjoining cemetery.

“The Blessing Property’s iconic Southern landscape in the Cooper River Historical District makes it an ideal space for a Regional County Park,” says Nick Yoder, Berkeley County Greenbelt Program Director. “To preserve and protect this land from development and make it available for public access is a huge early success for the Greenbelt program and Berkeley County residents.”



Berkeley County hosted a sneak peak of the Blessing Plantation on November 22 to allow the public to tour the property before it officially opens. It is estimated around 300 people stopped by.

The property is now closed while we work to create a master plan for its future. The County will solicit public feedback prior to any finalized plans as the process moves forward. Stay tuned for updates at BerkeleyGreenbelt.com.



What is National Night Out?

Moncks Corner Police Department National Night Out 2025

On October 7th, the staff of the Berkeley Soil and Water Conservation District attended the National Night Out Community Event sponsored by the Moncks Corner Police Department. We were joined by over 15 different companies and individuals who provide services vital to Berkeley County. It was a great to make new friends and be able to share what the Conservation does for Berkeley in the way of preserving our history and providing recreational opportunities for every age.



BSWCD Earth Team Happenings

Roxy Bishop Introduces Sheila Baxley, New Earth Team Coordinator

“Looking forward to a great 2026 for the Earth Team Volunteers. So thankful for Roxy and Loretta for their many years of expertise and experience. We will continue to see them in various volunteer opportunities throughout the coming year. For those who have already shared thoughts and ideas, I thank you. Fun in Nature is a big theme in ecotourism and in education. Our conservation efforts are working to make this possible. Thank you for welcoming me the team!” -Sheila Baxley



Earth Team Field Trip to Magnolia Gardens



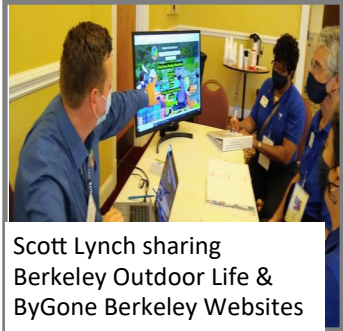
Earth Team members Enjoy Volunteering at “Celebrate the Season” at Old Santee Canal Park, “Santa In The Swamp” at Cypress Gardens and a Christmas Party



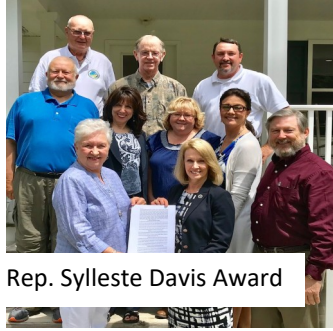
Bushy Park Boat Landing Cleanup
And Monthly Meeting
Will begin again
January 13, 2026

Volunteer Opportunities
Cypress Gardens and Old Santee Canal Park
(843)719-4146 or
info@berkeleysoilandwater.com

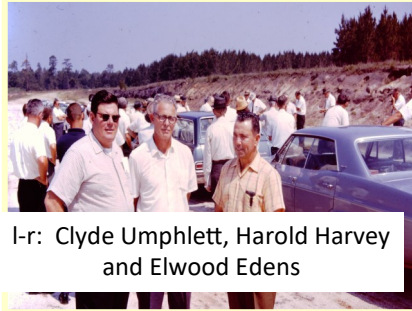
BSWCD: MAKING A DIFFERENCE PAST TO FUTURE



Scott Lynch sharing Berkeley Outdoor Life & ByGone Berkeley Websites



Rep. Sylleste Davis Award



I-r: Clyde Umphlett, Harold Harvey and Elwood Edens



Conservation at County Fair



BSWCD Earth Team Volunteers



Larry Wyndham



Kids Who Care "Naturescope"



Swamp Fox Passage of Palmetto Trail Project Ribbon Cutting



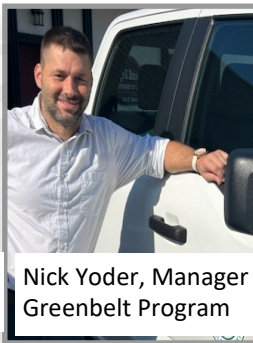
Steve Blankenship & Barry Jurs working on the Wadboo Stormwater Drainage project



berkeleybees



SC Order of the Palmetto Award



Nick Yoder, Manager Greenbelt Program



SC House of Representative's Resolution Award



Volunteers at Festivals



Chair Edwins and Addison Foster Scholarship Winner



2018 Outstanding District of the Year



Lori Bataller, Former District Conservatorist

Environmental History of Berkeley County
 "Avoiding A Wump World"
 Carol Poole, Director






BSWCD and The Berkeley County Farm Bureau Working Together—Making A Difference



When many people think about Farm Bureau they think insurance. However, we are much more than that. The South Carolina Farm Bureau is a statewide organization that brings farmers, ranchers, entrepreneurs, agribusiness professionals and food enthusiasts together to strengthen the future of agriculture in South Carolina. We inform lawmakers about the impact of policies, train young farmers about getting started and help educate teachers and students about agriculture.

The mission of the Farm Bureau is to promote agricultural interests in the state of South Carolina and optimize the lives of those involved in agriculture while being respectful to the needs and concerns of all citizens of our state.

We are all in this together from the farm field to the grocery store. Membership is a great way to show support! We all benefit from a strong agricultural community. You don't have to be a farmer to join the Farm Bureau. If you would like to become part of something bigger, feel free to follow the link below. We look forward to joining together with you and support of our farmers! <https://myhomeplace.scfb.org/Membership>



Ag in the Classroom

If you'd like to learn more about our Ag Education program, the mobile learning lab, or simply how to get more involved please contact Mrs. [Pat Muckenfuss](#)! While the students enjoyed a variety of hands-on and Virtual learning, our Berkeley County Farm Bureau Insurance friends provided the teachers with Jersey Mikes for lunch! For more information call Pat Muckenfuss at 843-729-6900.





223 East Main Street, Ste. B

Moncks Corner, SC 29461

Winter 2025-2026

Grow with us—there's so much to do in Berkeley County!

**YES, I would like to become a supporting Affiliate member of the
Berkeley Soil and Water Conservation District!**

2026 Membership (please circle one) *\$500—Golden Ambassador
*\$250—Ambassador *\$200—Conservationist *\$150 Sustaining Member
*\$100—Patron Member *\$50 Student (under 20 y/o) Member

Name/Company Name _____

Email _____ **Contact #** _____

Mailing Address _____

Mail or bring a check to: 223 E. Main Street, Ste. B, Moncks Corner, SC 29461, Office 843-719-4146

**The BSWCD Board meets monthly, The 4th Tuesday of the month at 11:00 am.
Most meetings are held at Old Santee Canal Park. If you are interested in attending
a meeting, call our office a week prior to the meeting for confirmation on location.**