

AIKEN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Resource Conservation Plan

2017-2022



Aiken Soil and Water Conservation District
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Long Range Plan

The following plan has been developed by the ASWCD Board of Commissioners, NRCS staff, a district employee, and Associate Commissioners. The plan provides a summary of the organizational structure, identifies key natural resource issues, priorities and strategies, and provides an overview of the services, programs, and assistance available to Aiken County landowners and residents. This five year, long range plan serves as a guide and basis for each year's annual plan of work. The plan will be revised and updated as needed.

Introduction

The Aiken County Soil and Water Conservation District Board administers the Aiken County Soil and Water Conservation District (encompassing all of Aiken County) for the purposes of 1) being responsible to the citizens of the county in matters involving natural resource conservation, 2) to promote the wise and responsible use of natural resources, and 3) to develop and implement programs to protect and conserve soil, water, farmland, woodland, wildlife, energy and riparian and wetland resources of the county.

The Aiken County Soil & Water Conservation District board consists of three locally elected members and two state appointed board members representing a wide variety of professional and personal backgrounds. They are dedicated, non-partisan, volunteers serving the citizens and initiating projects to address the natural resource conservation needs within the district. The Aiken SWCD Board is committed to promoting the wise use and enhancement of all natural resources and providing conservation education for Aiken County residents. Currently, the Aiken SWCD employs one full-time Office Manager and Administrator. The staff is provided office space by the USDA-NRCS in the Aiken County Field Office. The Board members, staff, and interested conservation partners meet during regularly scheduled meetings. In addition to handling the business of the Board and its budget, board meetings are held to discuss natural resource issues and priorities within the District and to identify new opportunities for conservation partnership. In addition, the Board members attend local, state, and national meetings and regional training/demonstration events on behalf of the district.

The Aiken County Conservation District is a subdivisions of state government and organized pursuant to Sec. 48-9-10 "Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law" and Sec. 48-11-10 "Watershed Conservation Districts" of the South Carolina Code of Laws. The Conservation District is unique in that no other state agency has similar responsibilities. By law, the SWCD should initiate conservation activities within the district and other agencies and groups may assist as requested or desired.

The Board functions as a committee utilizing a Chairman following traditional Rules of Order. Subcommittees may be used as necessary at the pleasure of the Chairman. In addition to elected and appointed Commissioners, interested persons may seek non-voting membership on the Board as Associate Commissioners. The Associate Commissioners may participate in all discussions and business of the Board and add valuable contributions and knowledge.

Board of Commissioners

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Neely Page Secretary-Treasurer	2345 Green Pond Rd Jackson, SC 29831	803-645-7735 n.page@contractorssouth.com
Thomas McElmurray	646 Atomic Rd Jackson, SC 29831	803-471-3661
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Mission

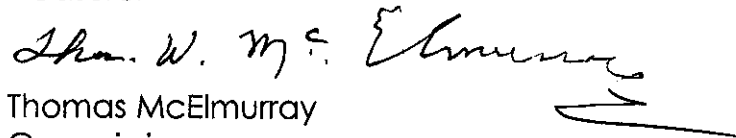
The Aiken Soil and Water Conservation District's mission is to lead local efforts to promote the conservation, stewardship, economic and ecological sustainability of natural resources through the development of strategies, comprehensive plans, and educational outreach efforts on behalf of the citizens of Aiken County through the coordination of leadership, information, and funding.

Certificate of Adoption

We, the Board of Commissioners of the Aiken Soil and Water Conservation District, this 10 day of August, 2016, do hereby approve the following document know as the Aiken Soil and Water Conservation District Resource Conservation Plan (2017-2022).


Yvonne Kling
Chair


Neely Page
Treasurer


Thomas McElmurray
Commissioner


Brad Harmon
Commissioner


Vince Furtick
Commissioner

Goal 1: Promote the Aiken SWCD, improve community relations throughout the county, and acquire a larger foundation of affiliate members and volunteers.

1. Expand the district's social media presence
 - a. Update posts/statuses to social media websites like Twitter and Facebook once a week
 - b. Update the district's website monthly
 - i. Update the meeting minutes after every board meeting
 - ii. Upload meeting agendas before every meeting
 - iii. Submit a blog post once a month of district activities
2. Create a working agricultural directory for Aiken County
 - a. Have the directory available in the office and on the website
 - i. Provide a form on the district website for any service providers that would like to be included
3. Hold a membership banquet combined with the annual dinner to honor affiliate members once a year
4. Hold a networking session once a year
 - a. The district will chose a core group or organization to hold a meeting with in order to promote partnership opportunities
 - b. The district will provide a small lunch or dinner
5. Quarterly newsletter
 - a. A quarterly newsletter will be published in February, May, August, and November highlighting district events and activities
 - b. The newsletter will be mailed out to all affiliate members
 - c. Newsletters will be published on the district website
6. Advertise and administer the Jeffrey Dale Swartz Scholarship Program
 - a. Once a year donate \$1000.00 to an Aiken County graduating high school senior attending college the fall semester of the year they graduate
7. Erect and maintain 11 district boundary signs

Goal 2: Provide Technical Assistance to Aiken County landowners and participate in educational outreach in the community and Aiken County Schools.

1. Explore opportunities to diversify agricultural operations
 - a. Hold one workshop a year on new agricultural technologies or ideas
2. Educate landowners on established, best management practices
 - a. Hold one workshop a year promoting agricultural best management practices
3. Develop a campaign to educate/ provide technical assistance addressing stream buffers
4. Aiken County School Involvement
 - a. Develop and implement lessons in Aiken County classrooms 1-2 a month
 - b. Plan and develop an outdoor classroom/ schoolyard habitat
5. Address urban encroachment in Aiken County
 - a. Develop relationships with realtors and county officials
 - b. Participate in conservation easement programs
 - c. Attend Aiken County Council meetings
6. Promote soil health techniques by renting/selling equipment
 - a. Rent out the Grain Drill
 - b. Rent out the WeedWiper
 - c. Sell GeoTextile Fabric at a discounted rate
 - d. Sell drip irrigation supplies at a discounted rate

Goal 3: Partner with local, state, and federal agencies to further the ASWCD's mission.

1. Partner with the City of Aiken
 - a. Help the City of Aiken establish a cost-share program for city residents to improve water quality in Shaw's Creek
 - b. Help implement conservation practices for those that qualify for the cost share program
2. Plan and develop a community garden
 - a. Use volunteers to upkeep the garden and donate the food
3. SC Forestry Commission/ Forestry Association
 - a. Plan, develop, and implement a campaign to education Aiken county residents on prescribed burning
 - b. Develop an annual "month" dedicated to prescribed fire education (January/February)
4. Hobby Farmers
 - a. Develop a workshop/club for Aiken County hobby farmers
5. FFA
 - a. Attend FFA meetings once a month
 - b. Plan and develop a contest once a year to involve FFA students
6. Environmental Science Education Cooperative
 - a. Promote the Eco-Meet for Aiken County Middle Schools and encourage participation
 - b. Attend quarterly meetings
7. NRCS
 - a. Review and submit a Contribution Agreement yearly
 - b. Manage EQIP applications, contracts, payments, modifications
 - c. Upload all documents to SharePoint and DMS
 - d. Schedule field visits
8. SCDNR/SCDHEC/USGS
 - a. Attend meetings pertaining to water availability in the Aiken District, in particular, the USGS/SCDNR Groundwater Availability Project and the SCDNR/SCDHEC Surface Water Availability meetings for both the Savannah River Basin and the Edisto River Basin
 - b. Be actively involved in the draft of the Regional Water Plans and the State Water Plan as they are defined from the developed models