

2025



Year in a Glance

THE BOARD

Jamie Gunter, *Chairman*

Larry Nates, *Vice-Chairman*

Barbara Padget, *Treasurer*

Kathy Hensley

Brad Sease

STAFF

Kassidy Roof, *District Manager*

Nick Walker, *Administrative Assistant*

, *Education Program Assistant*

PARTNERS

Josh Boatwright, *NRCS-District Conservationist*

Jamie Tyler, *NRCS-Soil Conservationist*

Taylon Holmes, *NRCS-Soil Conservationist Technician*

Tyler Brown, *DNR-Program Manager*

Jessica Egan, *DNR-Program Manager*

STAFF NEWS

We may have had some troubles with hiring a new Education Program Assistant, but we haven't let that slow us down.

ANNUAL BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS

THE BILL MELVEN CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR AWARD

Matt Schnabel – PLT Coordinator



Matt Schnabel is the Environmental Education Coordinator for the SC Forestry Commission, directs the agency's environmental education programs, and serves on the incident management team.

Matt coordinates the SC Project Learning Tree and Wood Magic Forest Fair programs and partners with SC FFA to hold the forestry camp and annual forestry competition. Matt also mentors environmental projects at local schools through the SC Green Steps Schools program and leads forest-focused educational programs for youth.

FRIEND OF CONSERVATION AWARD **Amick Farms**

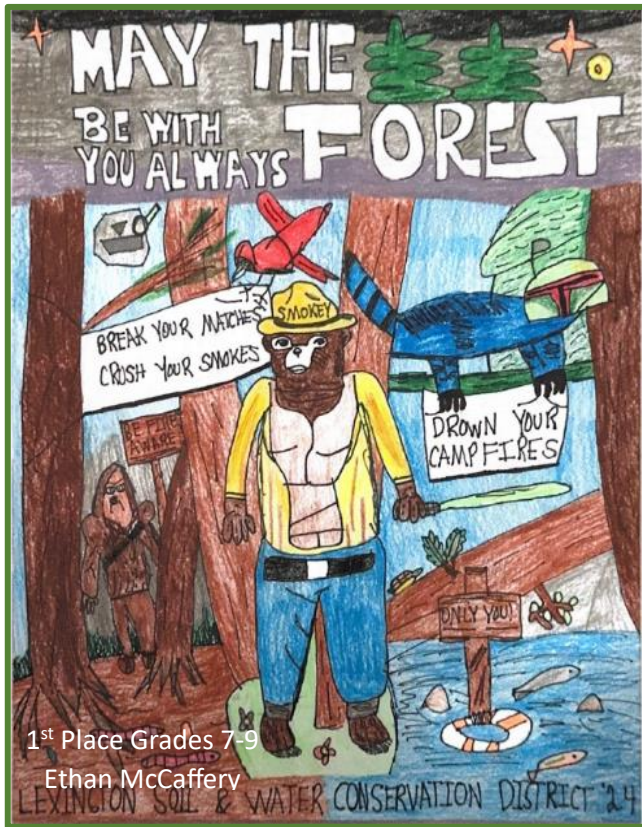


Amick Farms is a true friend of conservation and has made great strides to minimize their environmental impact over the years. They are continuously evaluating and improving aspects of their operations by focusing on water use, recycling, and transportation.

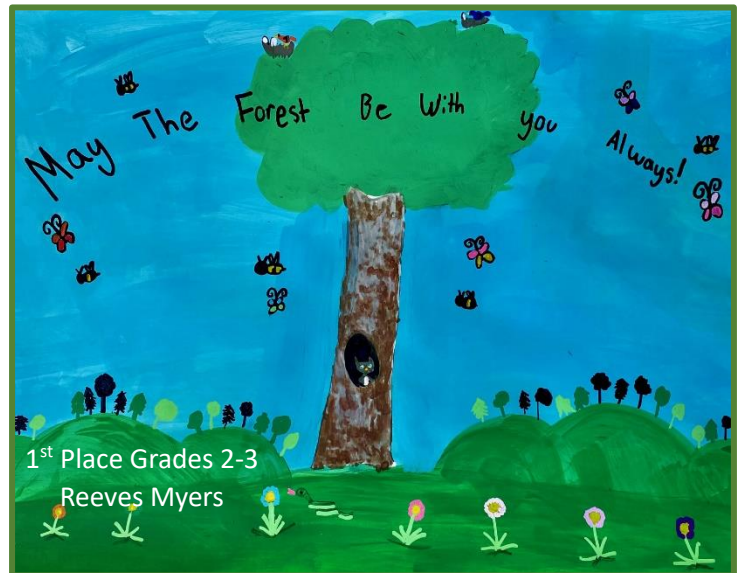
- Reduced water usage by over 70 million gallons annually by reclaiming, treating and reusing over 330,000 gallons daily.
- Save approximately 6,000 trees by recycling nearly 728,000 pounds of cardboard annually.

PHOTOGRAPHY & POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

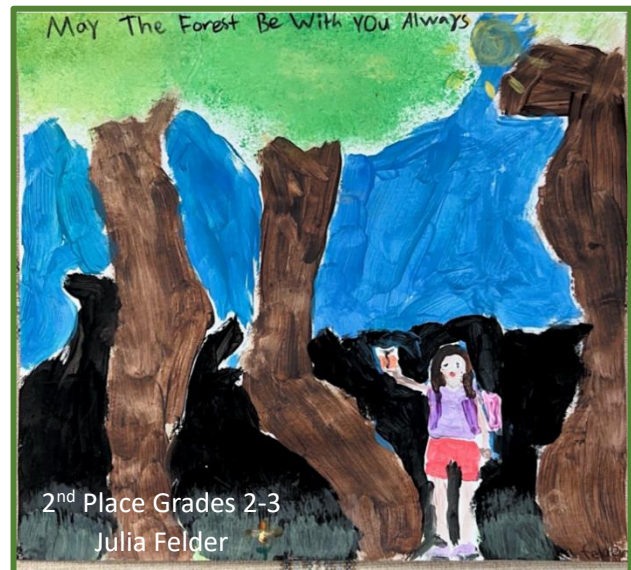
Poster Contest Winners



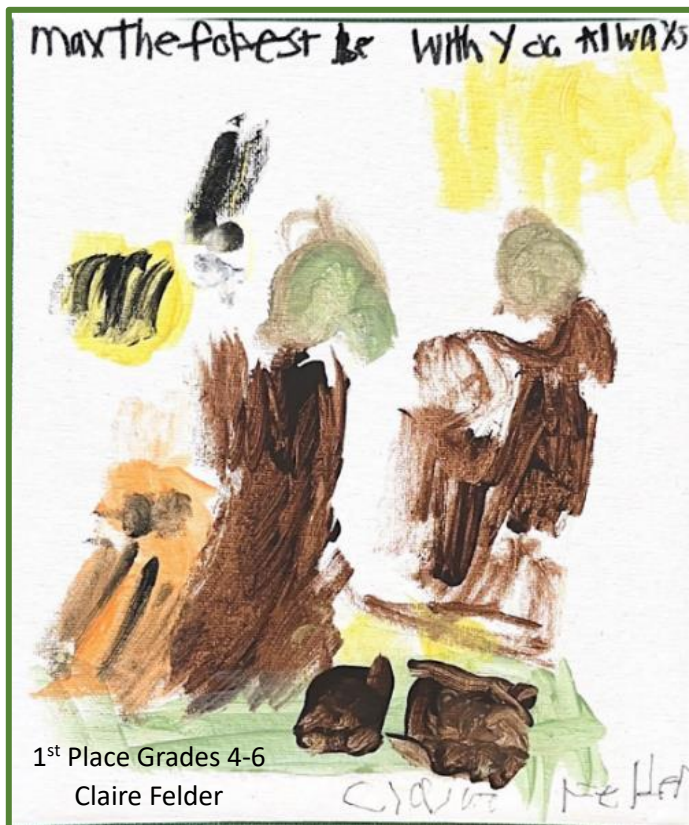
1st Place Grades 7-9
Ethan McCaffery



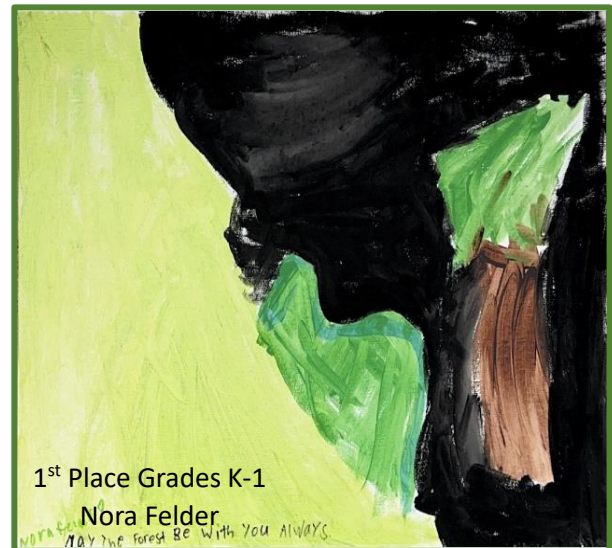
1st Place Grades 2-3
Reeves Myers



2nd Place Grades 2-3
Julia Felder



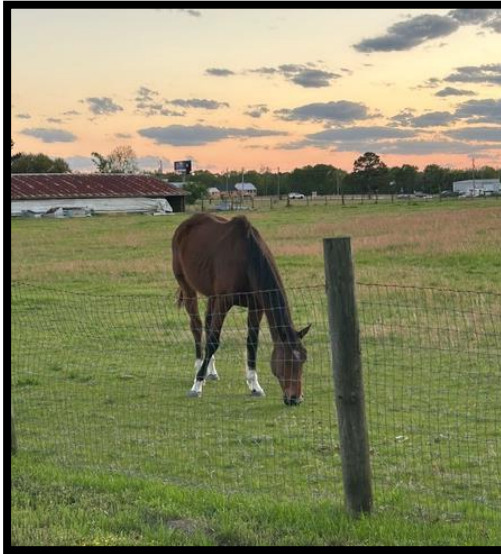
1st Place Grades 4-6
Claire Felder



1st Place Grades K-1
Nora Felder

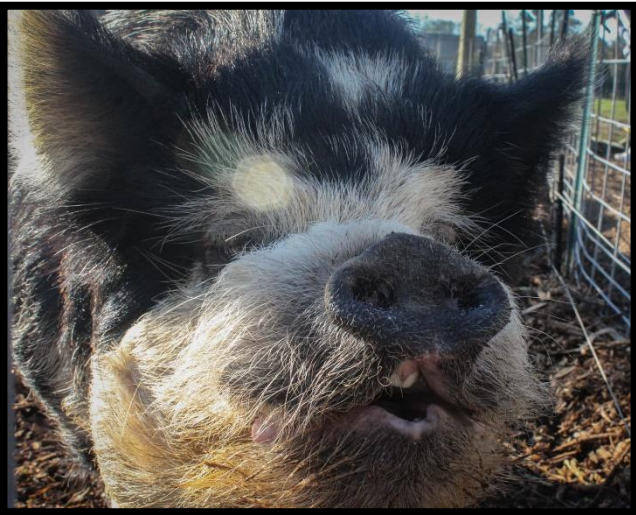
PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Division II Photography Winner



Division I Photography Winners





EDUCATION CORNER

MINI GRANT RECIPIENTS

Beechwood Middle School Garden Refresh

Angela Kruger and her students used the mini grant funds to refresh the beds for their farm-to-table garden.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Emma McCaffrey - Batesburg-Leesville HS

Historian of her school's FFA, and the Lexington County 4-H President she intends to major in Horticulture at Piedmont Technical College.

Laiken Brock - Batesburg-Leesville HS

Student Body President & VP of the BETA Club she intends to major in Animal & Veterinary Sciences at Clemson University to fulfill her dream to open her own veterinary practice.

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Schools Reached

Saxe Gotha Elementary	Beechwood Middle
Forts Pond Elementary	Irmo Middle
Pleasant Hill Elementary	Carolina Springs Middle
Gilbert Elementary	White Knoll Middle

Programs

Pollinators	Water Pollution
Soil Erosion	Water Conservation
Composting	

Afterschool Reading Program

Our afterschool program had been a big hit this year with four schools participating: Forts Pond and Saxe Gotha Elementary, and two new schools: Pelion and Centerville Elementary. With the books we receive from the Ag in the Classroom program we've had at least two programs each month (not counting June-August) where students get to enjoy fun, hands-on activities such as making 'fry bread' out of play dough, bean drums, pipe cleaner bees and coloring sheets.



Green Steps

Our District Manager has been hard at work as the composting mentor for Lexington. She's attended many meetings and held a vermicomposting presentation for the 6th graders at Irmo middle school and helped them make their own classroom vermicompost bin.

Wood Magic Forest Fair

Our staff spent four days helping out at the at the Harbison State Forest where students from various schools learned about sawmills, how paper is made, gifts of the forest and how fire is used to help forests grow.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Seed Library

Our Seed Library went live this year, and like many new programs it's had a few growing pains. Our administrative Assistant learned firsthand that winter squash does not mean you grow it in the fall, and to always purchase more seed than you think you need.

We held two programs at the Swansea Library, and one each at the Gilbert and Gaston libraries. Although each program had less than 15 people, over 100 packets were taken from each location while our Seed Library was there. We're hoping to introduce more interactive programs in 2025 such as: paint-a-pot, decorate a window box, suncatchers, etc.

Backyard Benefits with Lexington Stormwater Consortium

Our collaboration with Lexington Stormwater Consortium and Lexington Solid Waste Management has been growing rapidly with three rain barrel workshops this year. The second workshop of the year was hosted at the Batesburg-Leesville Town Hall and our friends at Saluda Soil & Water Conservation District partnered with us for this event and provided a light breakfast of juice, muffins, granola bars, yogurt and fruit

Each BB event has a Composting and Rain Barrels 101 lesson along with a special topic and one of LSWCD's main duties during this collaboration is to provide the presentation for that. This year we're covered pollinators, backyard gardening and invasive plant/bug species.



Festival Daze

This year we participated in the Herb Festival, coordinated by the Herb Bunch, the Earth Day Festival at McGregor Presbyterian Church and the Icehouse market. We gave away seeds at the Herb Festival and told everyone who stopped by to check out this year's Lexington Ag+Art Tour. The animal tracks we received from SCDNR and our enviroscape drew many people to our table during the Earth Day festival.

Lakesweep/Riversweep

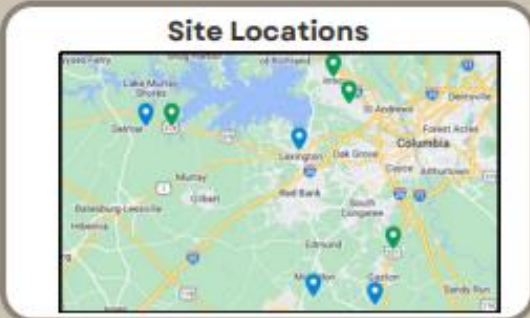
We had a lot of fun helping out with the Lakesweep Riversweep hosted by Keep the Midlands Beautiful. The rain did pelt us steadily at the start of the day, but our site at had Catfish Johnny's had 35 dedicated volunteers and they collected 51 bags of trash. The most notable items were a tire and a large inflatable tube.

Ag + Art Tour

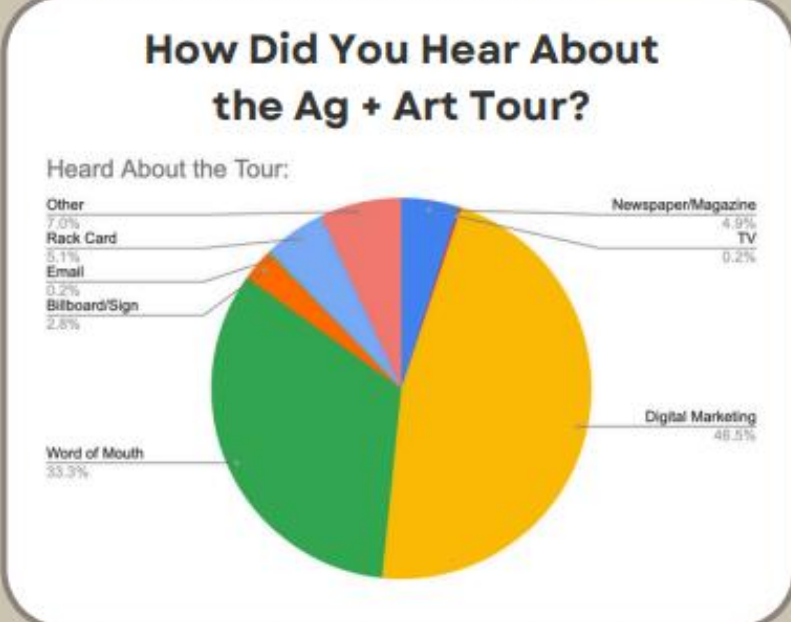
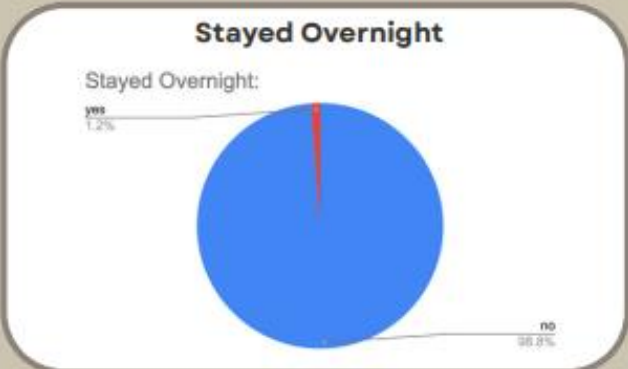
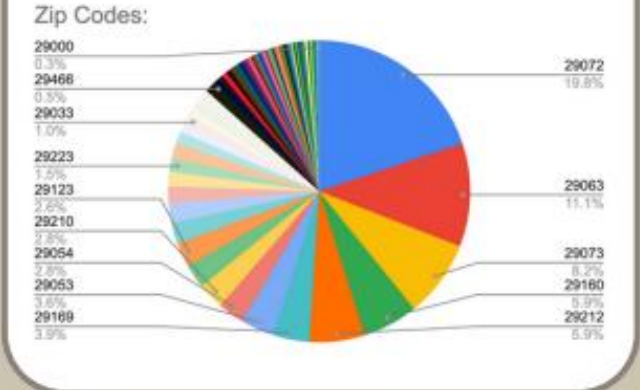


2024 Lexington County Ag + Art Quick Facts

1669
2024 attendees*



Participant ZIP Codes*



Site Attendance

Tour Site:	Signed in:	Clicker:
Fire Barrel Farm	270	265
Hollow Creek Distillery	73	362
Lexington County Museum	46	69
Locklair Farms	148	187
Loveland Coffee	28	279
Meador Acres Chesnuts	99	105
Seven Oaks Plant Shop	280	298
Utopia Farm, LLC	99	104
Totals:	1043	1669

*Total 2024 attendance number given by the highest value between a site's clicker and sign-in data.



MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

Teacher's Luncheon

At the beginning of August, we invited all the Lexington County teachers to a 2024-2025 Program Planning luncheon. We treated the 22 attendees to lunch from Apple Spice as we outlined the programs we offer, passed out activity sheets, and highlighted our Mini-Grant and scholarship programs. We encouraged the teachers to get their students involved with our photography and poster contests, and to nominate teachers for our teacher of the year award. Jane Hiller stopped by to talk about how important it is for schools to get involved with Green Steps and how to access the mentors.



Local Work Group Meeting

At the end of June, we held our annual LWG meeting to give producers, landowners, and stakeholders an opportunity to discuss their concerns.

FORESTRY

- 1) Deforestation
- 2) New development/infrastructure causing run off, erosion and increased litter
- 3) Forest Management / Smoke Management plan

PASTURE

- 1) Lack of forage
- 2) Rotational grazing
- 3) Animal containment, fencing

CROPLAND

- 1) Decrease in agricultural land
- 2) Access to water, especially groundwater & water regulation
- 3) Erosion

ANIMAL WASTE/POULTRY

- 1) Composting regulations & litter needed for crops being shipped to other states
- 2) Water Quality – ground water contamination & Surface water contamination/protection
- 3) Lack of public agriculture education – odor

AFFILIATE DRIVE

Rapid urbanization in our county continues to put great pressure on natural resources resulting in the disappearance of farmland, open space vistas (like pastureland), and wooded areas. The loss of trees to development, as well as the lack of preservation of green spaces and buffers along some of our beautiful streams in the county, is highly concerning. Your help can give us a stronger voice in educating Lexington County residents on conservation efforts.

Support from our Affiliate members provides funding for our variety of programs such as:

- Helping county students attend conservation workshops
- Providing college scholarships related to environmental and conservation majors
- Celebrating Arbor Day in elementary schools
- Student photography and poster contests that highlight agriculture, recycling, water quality, and an appreciation for our natural resources
- Providing Mini grants to support conservation projects and youth environmental education initiatives

In an effort to improve the environmental growth and stability of Lexington County in a responsible manner, we work with community leaders and schools to educate citizens on water quality and quantity issues, erosion control and sedimentation issues. Our District has organized workshops on tree care, rain barrels, beaver/wild hog/coyote management, and the importance of bees and pollination. With your support we hope to provide more classroom and community programs, future summer activities and workshops.

To former and current affiliates, we truly appreciate all of the support you have giving us throughout the years. Your contributions have helped us impact our community in positive ways. We hope that with your continued support, and that of new affiliate members, we can promote more programs that will help us continue our conservation efforts.

SEPT '23- JULY '24 AFFILIATES

Golden Eagle

Amick Farms
J.C. Wilkie Construction, LLC

Osprey

Price's Country Store	Oswald Wholesale Lumber, Inc., Jim Oswald	Bill Scott
South State Bank	Clayton Rawl Farms, Inc., Chris Rawl	Kathy Hensley
	Walter P. Rawl & Sons, Inc.	

Silver Fox

Gilbert-Summit Rural Water District	Virgil & Marie Leaphart	Hugh Rogers
Congaree Land Trust	Norm & Tina Blum	Matt & Celeste Schnabel
Shealy's Bar-B-Que	Hugh Caldwell	Senator Katrina Shealy
Shealy's Reality, Inc	Steve DeKozlowski	Huly & Brenda Shumpert
Economy Furniture Company	Kathy Hensley	James Slice
W.P. Law, Inc.	Al & Linda McNeill	Tommy & Jenny Stone
First Community Bank	Larry & Beverly Nates	Brent Weaver
S. C. Pole & Piling, Inc.	Barbara Padget	
Caughman's Meat Plant, Inc.		
Midlands Electric Cooperative		
Sease Farms, Inc.		
Red Ridge Farm		

Friends of Conservation

Harmony Hills Farms	Joel Bickley	James & Carol Metts
Barr-Price Funeral Home	The Honorable Larry Brigham Jr	The Honorable Russell Ott
Heritage Landscape Services, Inc	Dwight & Julia Davis	Barbara Padget
AAA Well Drilling Service	Billy & Beth Derrick	Paul & Susan Schreiber
Toole Enterprises	Walt & Richie Douglas	Richard & Sharon Shealy
Carts Plus	James N Gunter	Von & Vicki Snelgrove
Ag South Farm Credit	Jamie Gunter	George & Joy Sullivan
Rikard Farms	Edith Harmon	
Aman Enterprise LLC		