



PICKENS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2020 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Pickens Soil & Water Conservation District is dedicated to Natural Resource Conservation in Pickens County. Serving Pickens County since 1937

The Beautiful Jocassee Gorges

This Summer, take a day and visit this beautiful area, that is just a short drive away!

In the uppermost reaches of South Carolina, the clear waters of Lake Jocassee splash against the base of the Blue Ridge Escarpment, a "Blue Wall" of hills that represent the sharp transition between our Carolina Mountains and Piedmont. Here forested slopes drop in elevation by 2,000 vertical feet in a matter of one to two miles.

This steep forested condition represents the Escarpment's general character throughout its length in Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. Around Lake Jocassee (from the South Carolina/Georgia line eastward to Jones Gap State Park), however, a series of steep-sided gorges carrying surging mountain rivers and streams down to the Piedmont has cut the generally uniform sloping face of the Escarpment. These gorges together are known as the Jocassee Gorges. Streams with names such as Saluda, Eastatoe, Laurel Fork, Toxaway, Horsepasture, Bearcamp, Thompson, Whitewater, Devils Fork and Chattooga carved these rugged gorges and produced scenic waterfalls and other natural beauties. These gorges, their streams, and the more than 75 inches of precipitation that occurs here each year make this area unique among mountain settings in the eastern United States.



The name "Jocassee," according to Native American legend, means "Place of the Lost One." Evocative Indian names echo throughout the Jocassee region, such as Oconee and Eastatoe, both tribes which inhabited the area. The Eastatoees were called the Green Birds and likely received their name from the Carolina parakeet, the only parrot native to eastern North America, a species that became extinct in 1904. The Eastatoe valley was the last site where scientists recorded a sighting of the species in South Carolina. This region has drawn the attention of scientists for centuries. It is where, in the mid-1700s, William Bartram discovered the flame azalea along with other species new to science, and enjoyed "a view inexpressibly magnificent and comprehensive" from the crest of Oconee Mountain (now Station Mountain).

In 1787, botanist Andre Michaux discovered his "small plant with saw-toothed leaves" that today is recognized as Oconee bells, a rare plant species that is a hallmark of the Jocassee Gorges. It was also the location of many detailed botanical studies that in the mid-1900s documented the unique qualities of the Jocassee Gorges region. During the past century, much of the land has been owned and managed by commercial timber interests.



In more recent years, the area has also been the site of important wildlife and fisheries restoration projects involving white-tailed deer, wild turkey, peregrine falcons, and brook trout, among others. Perhaps most important, this mountainous region across the upper reaches of South Carolina and adjacent North Carolina and Georgia has been the site of major conservation and land preservation efforts over the past decades. These efforts involved federal and state agencies, land trusts, conservation groups and corporations. These organizations have provided for us, and future generations, a protected landscape and ecosystem that will ensure the continuation of important natural resources while allowing compatible and safe use by the public.

Jocassee Gorges was protected thanks to a cooperative acquisition effort between [the S.C. Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#), [Duke Energy](#) and the [Richard King Mellon Foundation](#), assisted by [The Conservation Fund](#). Recently completed and proposed acquisitions of these Jocassee Gorges lands by state and federal agencies and the establishment by Duke Energy of a conservation easement on portions of its retained holdings -- ensure the continued protection of significant natural and recreational resources. It also provides an important physical linkage with extensive Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area lands to the east and National Forest lands to the west.

Together, these areas, plus conservation lands in adjacent North Carolina and Georgia, provide protection for about 150,000 acres associated with South Carolina's Blue Ridge Escarpment and its watersheds. The Jocassee Gorges tract contains about 43,500 acres. The S.C. Department of Natural Resources owns most of this land, and activities here are governed by a [management plan](#) and regulations they've developed, in large part, in response to public input. [The U.S. Forest Service](#) proposes to purchase land on the western edges of the tract and will manage these holdings as part of Sumter National Forest. Duke Energy, the former owner of all the Jocassee Gorges tract, has maintained ownership of some of the lands for the operation of its Bad Creek Pumped Storage Station. Duke Energy is also retaining other lands as an option for additional pumped storage hydro generation but has otherwise given up development rights through a conservation easement to the DNR. Public access to the Duke Energy lands is allowed. Activities on the Duke-owned portions vary according to location, but the conservation easement ensures access and inclusion of the lands in the DNR's Wildlife Management Area program.



The most important consideration in the Jocassee Gorges management plan is to maintain the natural character of the area. The secondary objective is to provide public recreation compatible with the area's natural character. Remember that the management plan is a living document and will evolve with time. Recreational activities provided for in the plan include hunting, fishing, hiking and horseback riding. The management plan also recognizes that Jocassee Gorges provides tremendous opportunity for scientific study and education. Many partners in addition to those already mentioned helped make the Jocassee Gorges acquisition possible. Among those partnering with the DNR were Duke Energy, Richard King Mellon Foundation; The Conservation Fund; North American Wetlands Conservation Council; S.C. General Assembly; S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism; S.C. Forestry Commission; Clemson University; Governor's Office; South Carolina Congressional Delegation; U.S. Forest Service; The Nature Conservancy; National Wild Turkey Federation; the law firm of Nelson, Mullins, Riley and Scarborough; the Foothills Trail Conference; Trout Unlimited; S.C. Wildlife Federation; Sierra Club; and many other groups and private individuals.

For more information, visit: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/managed/wild/jocassee/>



NRCS is here to help farmer's improve their usage of Natural Resources. Our motto is: "Helping people help the land"

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a new program designed to identify conservation concerns and set conservation priorities to address soil erosion, water quality, wildlife habitat and other resource issues through a community based process. EQIP is available in all 46 counties to address statewide resource concerns. Technical and financial assistance is available to assist landowners in addressing resource concerns on their property.

USDA works everyday to strengthen the American agricultural economy. Despite the difficult economic climate of the past years, our efforts - coupled with the 2008 Farm Bill, the Recovery Act, and the hard work and resilience of America's farmers and ranchers - are helping American agriculture lead the nation's recovery. We maintain a strong and appropriate safety net for America's farmers, ranchers and growers which includes assistance to struggling industries, disaster assistance, and crop insurance, and provide technical assistance, access to credit, and help producers implement conservation practices.

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/farming>

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with State, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value.

To qualify, farmland must:

- be part of a pending offer from a State, tribe, or local farmland protection program
- be privately owned;
- have a conservation plan for highly erodible land;
- be large enough to sustain agricultural production;
- be accessible to markets for what the land produces;
- have adequate infrastructure and agricultural support services;
- and have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production.

Depending on funding availability, proposals must be submitted by the eligible entities to the appropriate NRCS State Office during the application window.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) offers landowners incentives to conserve soil, water, and wildlife habitat. Landowners can apply to enroll highly erodible land and other environmentally sensitive areas in the CRP. By enrolling land, a landowner can receive annual rental payments and cost share benefits to implement conservation practices. Contact the local Farm Service Agency at 864.467.2755.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill) (Pub. L. 107-171) amended the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the program. CSP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

USDA recognizes that conservation by farmers, ranchers and forest owners today means thriving and sustainable agriculture for our future. Seventy percent of the nation's land is privately owned and conservation of our nation's private lands not only results in healthy soil, water, air, plants, animals and ecosystems, it also provides productive and sustainable working lands.

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/conservation>

Want to improve your land without tilling the soil? Take advantage of the Pickens Soil & Water No-Till Drill Rental Program. Contact us today to reserve your rental!

NO TILL RENTAL PROGRAM

No-Till Drills Improve Pastures. No-till drills plant seeds without tilling the soil. This makes pasture management easier, more economical, and reduces loss of soil. An acre meter on each drill measures use.

Rental Fee: \$25 minimum

For more rental information regarding rates and availability contact Amy Wilson 864-901-6946



Why Should You Use Our No-Till Drill?

Compare the results of the same Pickens County farm planted using a No-Till Drill versus Traditional Broadcast Planting.



-  Buy Less Seed
-  Grow Healthier Crops
-  Use Less Fuel
-  Prevent Weeds
-  Reduce Erosion & Runoff



_____	\$500	Trustees of the Land
_____	\$250	Guardians of the Land
_____	\$100	Keepers of the Land
_____	\$50	Stewards of the Land
_____	\$25	Defenders of the Land

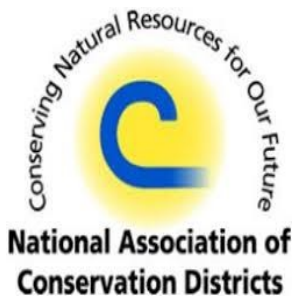
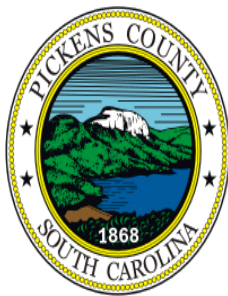
E-mail Address: _____

Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District

Aimee Brown

CLEMSON
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



For more information contact Steven O'Shields at oshiel3@clemson.edu

Tuesday, November 3, 2020
Election Day

Pickens Soil & Water Conservation District is excited to be partnering with Anderson & Pickens County Stormwater Partners, Clemson University Cooperative Extension and the Pickens County Beautification Committee



Want to serve on the Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District Board, Georges Creek Watershed Board, or the Oolenoy Watershed Board? The next election date for open seats will be November 3, 2020.

4205Pumpkintown Hwy. Pickens,
SC 29671
Time: 6:30pm unless noted other-
wise

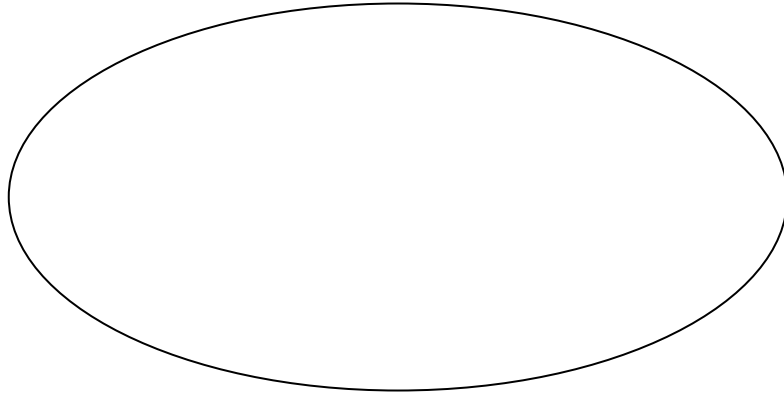
Steve Pace ~ Chairman
John Cutchin ~ Treasurer
Stewart Bauknight
Eddie Crittendon
Cynthia Wise

Pickens County 4-H is an organization of young people who wish to "Learn by Doing" in Pickens County, SC



Volunteers are needed to participate in Soil and Water Conservation activities. This is a great opportunity for you to participate in promoting Conservation in the Pickens County Community. For more information about volunteering
call: 864-878-6155
e-mail: pickensswcd@gmail.com

The PSWCD Newsletter is published to over 300 Affiliate members! Contact the Pickens Soil & Water office for more information! Call: 864-878-6155 or E-mail: pickensswcd@gmail.com



Summer Bucket List

*Watch a Sunset
Visit a Farmer's Market
Make Ice Cream
Play Mini Golf
Bonfire with Friends*

*Go on a Picnic
Go Fishing
Eat Watermelon
Go to the Beach
Go to a Barbecue*

*Swim in a Lake
Make S'mores
Swim in a Pool
Watch a Sunrise
Take a Day/Weekend Trip*

*Go Tubing
Go Camping
Go Hiking
Pick Berries*

*Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District would like to
Thank Pickens County Council and
Pickens County Administrator, Ken Roper,
for their continued support to Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District!
Your support is very much appreciated!*

Clemson Extension is hosting a webinar for the Upstate on Thursday, July 30th from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. entitled
"Healthy Ponds: Managing Water Quality and Aquatic Weeds"

<https://clemson.zoom.us/j/9448888888>

This webinar is intended for pond owners and managers and anyone else interested in learning how to manage water quality and aquatic weeds in ponds. The presenters/moderators will be Steven O'Shields, Susan Lunt, Haley Parent, and Heather Nix.

Topics to be discussed:

1. Dissolved oxygen, pH, total alkalinity, total hardness, and salinity
2. Watershed landscape effects on water quality and pond health
3. Resources for monitoring and managing water quality
4. Resources for identifying and managing aquatic weeds

For more information contact Steven O'Shields at oshield3@clemson.edu



Rain Barrel at Pickens County Education Building. Susan Lunt, ©2020 Clemson Extension

RAIN BARRELS: A FAMILY OR HOUSEMATES ACTIVITY

During this unprecedented time of social distancing and stay at home orders, it is the perfect time to consider making something together with your family or housemates that have a purpose and benefits the environment. Bonding over a fun and useful project will create memories, provide you with an item that you can utilize for years to come, and offer a rewarding experience that will hopefully inspire other valuable projects. One such activity is to make or purchase a rain barrel and then paint it to be uniquely yours. The rainwater that flows from a roof can be collected in a rain barrel and used for many purposes. By collecting the rainwater in a barrel, a practice known as harvesting rainwater, and using it around your home, you are helping conserve water resources, decreasing the potential for downstream contamination, and saving money. Did you know that 1000 square feet of roof and 1 inch of rain, can generate 600 gallons of water? You can minimize stormwater pollution by diverting

this water into your barrel, so it does not run overland picking up contaminants and carrying it to waterways. To find a good location for your barrel, and to identify potential uses, walk around your yard in search of areas that you can use the harvested rainwater. Look for areas around your roofline where there are signs of erosion or flooding. You can save money by using the collected rainwater for some of the chores around your home instead of tap water. Here are a few ideas:

- Use the water for irrigation of both indoor and outdoor plants including gardens, potted plants, and window boxes
- Use the water in birdbaths and feeders
- Use the water to clean garden equipment, patio furniture, bikes, cars, boats, and pets

Please note: do not drink water from rain barrels, and special considerations are necessary if harvested water is to be used for edible plants. If this document didn't answer your questions, please contact HGIC at hgic@clemson.edu or 1-888-656-9988.

Author(s) Susan Lunt, Water Resources Agent, Pickens County, Clemson Extension



Rain Barrel at South Carolina Botanical Gardens. Haley Parent, ©2020, Clemson Extension