

Richland

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Biggest Achievement of 2023



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District hosted the 2023 Richland County Ag + Art Tour, which featured stops at 15 farms and agribusinesses in Blythewood, Eastover, Hopkins, and Columbia. These sites showcased the diversity of local agriculture, including the production of fruits, vegetables, livestock, cut flowers, nursery stock, and forest products.

Each tour site featured local artisans, including painters, bakers, and musicians. More than 100 artisans were stationed at Richland County's 15 tour sites!

Tour sites counted 3,007 visitors during the tour. These visitors saw first-hand where their food comes from, watched artists in action and purchased their works, enjoyed the tunes of local musicians, and learned more about rural life.

Conservation by the Numbers

- 479 participants in district presentations (8) and workshops (5); 319 educators attended 30 professional development events; 4,379 people received monthly e-newsletters
- 92 classroom presentations delivered to 3,427 students; 75 students from 9 schools entered 2023 poster contest; 13 Green Step Schools mentored by district mentors
- 7,867 seed packets distributed through the Seed Sanctuary; 69 volunteers packed seeds during 5 community events

Other Notable Accomplishment

In 2023, the district awarded its 100th Conservation Education Mini-Grant to support conservation education in local schools. Nine projects funded in 2023 included two cafeteria composting initiatives, two school gardens, four classroom hydroponics towers, and a series of Outdoor STEM Classes at Rosewood Community Orchard. Mini-Grants provide up to \$1,000 in funding per project. The district has awarded over \$47,000 through the program since its launch in 2012. Funding for Mini-Grants is provided by donors through Friends of Richland Soil and Water Conservation District.

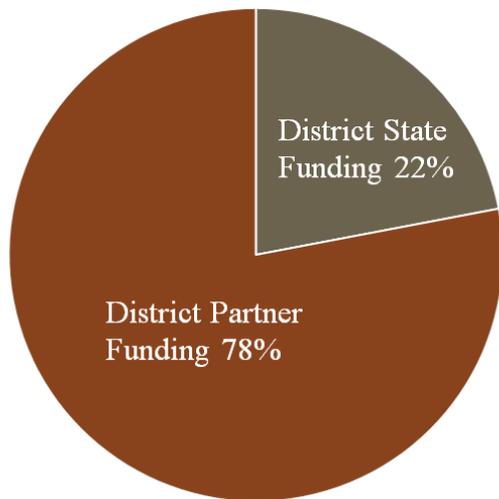


2024 District Plans

- Feature 20 local farms and agribusinesses on the Richland County Ag + Art Tour June 8-9 with financial support from partners
- Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from Dominion Energy, continue offering free seeds to residents through Seed Sanctuary program and will celebrate the 2024 stewardship theme, May the Forest Be With You Always with the community

South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts - 2023 Impact

State FY24 Conservation District Funding



For every \$1 of state appropriated funds to Conservation Districts, \$3.40 on average is leveraged to implement conservation programs in South Carolina.

Conservation Districts assist with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm Bill Programs which brought more than **\$55 million** to South Carolina's private lands for conservation implementation in federal FY23.

More than 190,000 students were reached by conservation district youth oriented programs such as school gardening, seed libraries, SC Envirothon, Arbor Day and Earth Day events, stormwater education, scholarships, and conservation related contests, etc.

More than 2 million adults were educated on conservation topics including Farm Bill Programs, pollinator promotion, stormwater mitigation, invasive species control, prescribed fire, water quality and conservation, habitat restoration, land easements, etc.

More than 10,000 acres statewide were impacted by conservation rental equipment available through conservation districts (no-till drills, prescribed fire equipment, hog traps, etc.).

SC Envirothon State Champions from Spartanburg Day School represented South Carolina at the 2023 international NCF-Envirothon Competition competing against teams from the US, Canada, Singapore and China.

Programs involving land easements, habitat restoration, invasive species removal, water conservation, watershed improvement, litter removal, and conservation education are just a handful of the vast conservation topics implemented statewide by Conservation Districts.