



South Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Society

WINTER 2009

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South Carolina's Own Hugh Caldwell Wins National SWCS Commendation Award

by Amy O. Maxwell
Past President, SC SWCS

Hugh Caldwell is an exemplary SWCS member, and his efforts, time, and energy are a large part of the reason that the South Carolina SWCS Chapter is as successful as it is. His efforts to improve the chapter almost always happen quietly, as Caldwell is one who would prefer to stay behind the scenes. Within his position with the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District as Man-

ager, he is helping to shape local policy through his intimate involvement on the Gills Creek Watershed Association, which is working to modify building codes/standards in the state's most urban county. He served a dual role of chapter secretary/treasurer for years, which now takes two people to do the same job. He served on many regional and national SWCS committees, including the Southeast regional

team the National Membership Committee. On this committee, he shared ideas and techniques that still inspire others to join and work for the chapter and the society. Congratulations Hugh!



South Carolina SWCS Receives Outstanding Chapter of the Southeast Award

by Jennifer Sarvis, Bishopville NRCS Field Office

South Carolina SWCS received the 2009 Outstanding Chapter of the Southeast Award. The success of the chapter in carrying out its overall program over the past year made SC SWCS worthy of the recognition. The award was presented at the 2009 Annual Conference in Dearborn, Michigan, and accepted by Hugh Smith, SC SWCS President—Elect.

The SC Chapter had a great year, and was able to increase membership from 92 to 108 members. Communications among chapter members was improved with a new email account, and the Chapter awarded three scholarships to outstanding students wishing to pursue careers in natural resources education. The Chapter also sponsored FFA students, and helped sponsor meetings of the Community Open Land Trust (COLT) and the 2009 South Carolina Conservation Partnership Conference. During the January 2009 Partnership Conference, the Chapter hosted a one-day symposium and held a one day symposium to educate people on *Simple Ways to Save Money on the Farm*. Thanks to all our members for helping us to grow and strengthen the SC Chapter this year, and we look forward to another great year in 2010!



SC SWCS Chapter helps an FFA student from SC visit the Great Wall of China. See inside for complete story.

A Visit to China: International Ag. Leadership Seminar SC FFA Student Exposed to International Ag. with Help from SC SWCS by Will Amick, State FFA Vice President



Amick visited the Xinfadi Wholesale Market during his tour of China.

As one of fifty state Future Farmers of America (FFA) officers from the U.S. selected by the National FFA Organization to participate in an International Agricultural Leadership Seminar in the Peoples Republic of China earlier this year, I experienced the excitement of traveling and studying in a foreign country. This was truly the trip of a lifetime!

The adventure began on January 5th, 2009, with a

full day of orientation in San Francisco followed by our departure the next day which included a twelve and one-half hour flight to China. The trip afforded me the chance to experience first-hand the agriculture of a country of over one billion people!

We arrived in Beijing and began our tour by taking an easy sightseeing walk to **Tiananmen Square**, the largest city square in the world and the

place where Mao's Mausoleum is located.

Following our first Chinese breakfast, we spent the morning sightseeing in the **Forbidden City**, the largest and best preserved Imperial Palace complex in the world. We also got to see the **Bird's Nest Olympic Stadium** and visit the **American Embassy** in official dress where we were briefed by a USDA agricultural attaché. In the evening we enjoyed a special **Peking Duck Banquet**.

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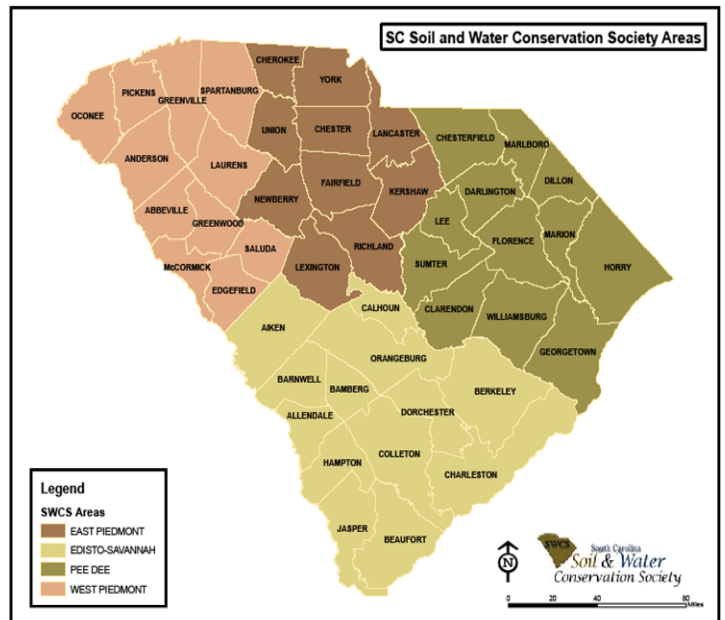
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FARMING NATURALLY

A Symposium Sponsored by SC SWCS

January 19, 2010
Hilton Head, South Carolina

**More details to follow, but mark your
 calendars now so you won't miss this
 exciting event!**

SC SWCS is proud to have co-sponsored this young man on the journey of a lifetime!

Continued....

The next day was spent visiting agri-industries, including the largest **organic vegetable farm** in the world, a **marsh gas station** and a **nursery garden**. After a one hour drive, our group visited a large **cattle farm** which provides 70 percent of the beef to the Beijing market. We also visited the **largest flower farm and greenhouses** in Beijing, including a stop at the **Xinfadi Agricultural Products Wholesale Market** which covers 150,000 square meters.

The fourth day of the adventure began by climbing the **Great Wall of China**, built during the period of 475-221 BC and one of the seven wonders of the world. We also visited the famous **Cloisonne factory** in Beijing. We spent the night on a train to **Xian**. The next day began with an early breakfast followed by visits to some very important historical sights including the 2180 year-old buried army of **Emperor Qin Shi Huang**. A visit to the **Big Wild Goose Pagoda** was followed by a bike ride along the **Ancient City Walls**. The day ended with dinner at the **Tang Dynasty Show**.

The next day we visited the **Northwest A & F University** in Yangling, one of the most famous agriculture universities in China and we conversed with faculty and students. While in Yangling, we visited the area where Chinese agricultural civilization had its beginning, and toured the **National Agriculture High-Tech**

Industry Demonstration Zone and student experimental fields.

Early the next day, we traveled to Shanghai to visit the **Sun Qiao Modern Agri-Development Zone**. Our next stop was at the **China Dairy Museum** to learn about the Chinese dairy industry. That afternoon, we drove for two hours to Suzhou, the “Venice of the East,” with an extensive network of canals, beautiful gardens and the Silk Capital of China.

The next day began with a visit to a **large dairy farm and milk processing system** followed by a stop at the **Suzhou Vegetable Research Institute**. After lunch we took a boat **cruise on a canal** and toured the **Suzhou Silk Institute**.

Our final full day in China included meeting with a representative from **Westfalia Surge, now GEA**, to learn about their operation. Then it was off to the **You Garden** with a history of 400 years, and more than 30 halls and pavilions. Additional sightseeing included **Nanjung Road**, one of the busiest shopping streets in China and a stroll on the **Bund**, Shanghai’s famous waterfront. Our China travel seminar ended with a **Farewell Dinner** and evening performance of **Chinese Acrobats**.

On Friday, January 16th, we departed **Shanghai** for our return trip to San Francisco and home. During that time, I had the unique opportunity to reflect on my experience from an interna-



Will Amick speaking at an FFA meeting about his trip to China.

tional perspective. I realized more than ever what it means to be an American....to live in a land blessed with agricultural abundance....and enjoy so many freedoms we often take for granted. It was also on that flight that I fully comprehended the significance of being affiliated with the world’s premier agricultural youth organization...the FFA!

I am keenly aware that the FFA has inspired me to reach for the stars in my quest for excellence in life. As a result of that commitment, I look forward with great anticipation to a successful career in the green industry....and serving my state and nation as a proud agricultural leader.

SWCS 64th International Annual Conference— *Delivering Conservation Today and Tomorrow*

By Hugh Smith, SC Chapter President-Elect

The 2009 SWCS Annual Conference was held in Dearborn, Michigan this July. This is the eleventh largest metropolitan area in the United States. The SWCS meeting offered a diverse agenda of meetings, workshops and networking opportunities, and I took advantage of as many as I could.

My flight out of Columbia to Michigan only took about one hour and twenty minutes. We flew over Lake Erie, and I realized I have never seen a lake that big! I arrived at the Dearborn Hyatt around 6:00 p.m.—still in the Eastern Time Zone—and got settled in my room. That evening I had the chance to meet several Michigan SWCS chapter members, and one of the volunteers asked me when our chapter was going to host the national conference again! As you may remember, South Carolina hosted in 2001 in Myrtle Beach, and many members throughout the country have fond memories of that meeting, and hope to return to the Palmetto State.

The next day consisted of a leadership conference on recruiting, retaining, and creating strong leaders for the future of the Society. There was a session on the art and science of organizing workshops and forums, and what I learned will help me with planning the January 19, 2010, SC SWCS symposium in Hilton Head.

I then took the opportunity to attend a Major League Baseball game between the hometown Detroit Tigers and the Cleveland Indians. It gave me a chance to explore Downtown Detroit and a great baseball game.

On Sunday, I heard the *State of the Society* address delivered by SWCS President Peggy James, and



Hugh Smith accepted the Outstanding Chapter Award during the SWCS meeting in Michigan.

then attended a technical workshop on native pollinators and conservation presented by the Xerces Society. I was familiar with the topic of pollinators from this past year's EQIP evaluation, so this workshop was helpful for me. Later that day, I went to a first timers orientation for the conference and that helped me map out my next few days to get to all the sessions that I wanted to go to.

The opening session on Monday morning was highlighted by the fact that USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack opened the session. The rest of the day was filled with breakout sessions on a wide variety of conservation topics, then a regional roundtable lunch during which I got to meet my Southeastern counterparts. That evening I previewed the movie "Dirt," along with 300 other conservationists.

The next day I attended the Awards Luncheon, and was proud to accept the Outstanding Chapter Award on behalf of the SC Chapter. Our own Hugh Caldwell was also recognized for his hard work and dedication.

Wednesday was a day to escape the confines of the hotel and tour some sights in spectacular weather (low humidity and a high temperature in the eighties!). We toured a Ford manufacturing plant, lake and stream-bank stabilization projects, and I was impressed with what I say of the beautiful state of Michigan.

I learned a lot and met lots of great people, and came back with ideas that will help me be a better conservationist. I want to thank NRCS and the Chapter for allowing me to attend. I encourage our Chapter to give at least one representative the opportunity to attend this meeting each year.



If you have any questions or ideas please send us an email at scswcs@live.com or view our website at <http://www.swcssc.org/>.

Send mail to Hugh Caldwell, PO BOX 192, Columbia, SC, 29202, or call (803) 576-2080.

SC Chapter Awards Nominations

Do you know someone who is deserving of recognition for any outstanding service to the world of conservation? If so, nominate them for one of our Chapter Awards!

The SC SWCS Chapter presents awards each year to deserving individuals, corporations, groups, local/state/federal conservation employees, and others who have gone above and beyond the normal scope of duties to protect soil and water quality, either within the state of SC, or beyond. There are several award categories and criteria for each of these divisions which can be viewed at: <http://www.swcssc.org/awards.html>. The award category is not essential to the selection process. The Chapter Awards Committee who reviews these applications will be happy to recommend an appropriate category based on the submitted narrative.

Name of NOMINEE _____

ADDRESS _____

MEMBER OF SC CHAPTER SWCS? YES _____ NO _____

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHY THIS NOMINEE DESERVES TO BE RECOGNIZED BY THE SC SWCS CHAPTER. (attach supporting materials as needed).

NOMINATION SUBMITTED BY:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHON/EMAIL _____

DATE SUBMITTED _____ SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR _____