



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

*2021 Annual Photo
Contest Winner
by Kris Kiernan*

*260 U.S. Hwy 301 North,
Suite 108
Baldwin, Florida 32234*



*(904)299-3112
www.duvalsoilandwater.com
duvalswcd@gmail.com*



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CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

It's always amazing to me to look back over the year and see the incredible work that the Duval Soil and Water Conservation District has done! Joined by over a hundred new volunteers this year, the District established Regeneration Park, an innovative green infrastructure and community stewardship project in the urban core. In addition, we expanded our annual Start Farming Panel Discussion and Market into a yearlong mentorship program for new farmers. These two initiatives were funded by the National Association of Conservation Districts and by generous businesses and citizens who contributed their time, talent and treasure to bring conservation education and technical assistance to residents right where they live and work.

Advocating for the stewardship of our land, water, forests, and wildlife is at the heart of all we do. For the last 68 years, the District has promoted the wise use of land and best management practices that will conserve,

improve and sustain the natural resources of Duval County. It brings us great pleasure to know that we are joined by nearly 3,000 conservation districts across the nation working for voluntary, locally-led conservation. Through this work, we ensure that we always have the ability to feed our communities and that our children and grandchildren will continue to enjoy our beautiful natural resources.

We are tremendously grateful for your passion and commitment to conservation. We now invite you to read this Annual Report and consider partnering with us. With your help, we can continue to be a model for conservation and stewardship.

Jennifer Casey

JENNIFER CASEY
2021 Chairperson

**ELECTED
BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS**



Jennifer Casey
CHAIRPERSON



James Cook
VICE CHAIRPERSON



John Barnes
SECRETARY



Allen L. Moore
TREASURER



Ashantae Green
HISTORIAN

MEMBERS & MISSION



**WE AIM TO DELIVER
NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION
TECHNOLOGY AND
EDUCATION TO LOCAL
LANDOWNERS AND
THE GENERAL PUBLIC,
AND TO PROMOTE THE
WISE USE OF LAND AND
BEST MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES THAT WILL
CONSERVE, IMPROVE,
AND SUSTAIN THE
NATURAL RESOURCES
OF DUVAL COUNTY**



**URBAN
AGRICULTURE
COORDINATOR**



Alison O'Donoughue

AFFILIATES



Tiffany Bess



Joshua Rosenberg

DISTRICT AID



Thea Baker

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

The District recognizes that educating our students and the general public on the need for natural resources conservation (Wise Use) is one of the most important aspects of our overall objectives. Therefore we have made program information available to persons of all ages and backgrounds. Conservation Awareness is made known through the District's educational programs, public relations, website, on-site presentations and general administration activities.



Fred B. Miller, Jr.
**REGIONAL
ENVIROTHON**

Student Hike
2021



Although the 2021 Envirothon competition was canceled due to the pandemic, we were able to have an Envirothon Sponsored Student Hike with resource professionals from the: St Johns River Water Management District and Florida Forest Service of Jacksonville.

Treat Our Teachers

This annual event brings teachers together to learn more about our K-12 educational programs including Envirothon and the speech and poster contest. Food and drinks were provided by local bakery, Community Loaves.



A dozen middle and high school students joined us for an educational viewing of "Kiss The Ground". These passionate stewards were part of a farming mentorship through Wealth Watchers.

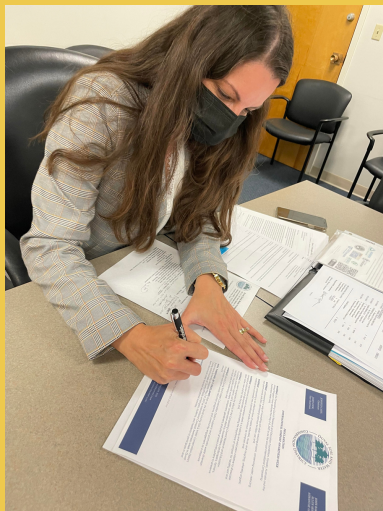


1st place winner for grades 4-6, Marvel Li of Jacksonville Beach Elementary. The theme of the speech and poster contest was "Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities."



Documentary Screening & Panel Discussion

We celebrated Stewardship Week and International Compost Awareness Week with a documentary screening of "Kiss the Ground" and panel discussion from some of our city's most passionate soil stewards at Sun-Ray Cinema.



International Compost Awareness Week

May 2 - 8, 2021

Chairperson Casey signed a resolution recognizing the first full week in May as International Compost Awareness Week in Duval County.

68th Anniversary Celebration

We celebrated our 68th Anniversary on World Conservation Day. Local sponsors, community advocates, and members of the public were all present to celebrate at the Garden Club of Jacksonville.

The Guest Speaker Kay Ehas, CEO of Groundwork Jacksonville, shared about the exciting projects their organization is championing to help with the development of downtown. The board also recognized the "Conservation Teacher of the Year."

We had over 75 attendees and raised over \$1,500.



Board members with Aesha Johnson of Jacksonville Beach Elementary, our 2021 Teacher of the Year



START FARMING



MENTORSHIP

We were awarded a grant for our Start Farming Mentorship Program from the National Association of Conservation Districts. This \$2500 grant supported new farmers by allowing us to provide tours of diverse farm operations and onsite workshops about sustainable practices, including water conservation, composting and permaculture.

"What I've found is there is no substitute for first-hand experience and seeing things with your own eyes."

*- 2021 Mentee
Don DeStephano*

HOMESTEAD & POLLINATORS

Our Start Farming Mentorship program spent the morning learning about biodiversity and permaculture at Juicy Roots Farm! After a tour with farm owner Jessi Fiske, participants made pollinator seed balls to grow a bee and pollinator-friendly farm with Joshua Rosenberg of NativeJax.



URBAN FARM & COMPOSTING



Located on 10.5 acres of a former brownfield in the heart of the Urban Core of Jacksonville, mentees walked the rows of White Harvest Farms and learned about the correlation between soil and plant health and how they can create a healthy soil microbiome with thermophilic composting methods. Afterwards, they learned about vermicomposting and assembled a worm bin.

RURAL COMMERCIAL & WATER CONSERVATION



We toured some of Congaree & Penn's 350 acres of mayhaw orchards and you-pick vines and fields and caught a glimpse of the possibilities of agritourism. After the tour, our Start Farming Mentees participated in a water conservation workshop midst the grapevines where participants were provided with materials to create their own rain barrels.

NON-PROFIT & AGENCY PARTNERS



To close out our Start Farming Mentorship, we held our agency partners workshop and were joined by Paul Gleason, our District Conservationist with NRCS and Tonya Ashworth, Horticulture Agent with UF / IFAS Extension Duval County Agriculture.

5TH ANNUAL

PANEL DISCUSSION & FARMERS MARKET

Over 70 community members gathered to hear from 4 local Farmers about their experiences in Agriculture. Attendees had the opportunity to holiday shop with a dozen vendors selling things like plant starts, compost, hand crafted ceramics, and nature themed art. Our food vendor sourced locally grown produce and pork, to highlight successful farmer to producer relationships.



New! REGENERATION PARK

The Regeneration Park Community Stewardship Project, made possible by grant awards from the National Association of Conservation Districts and the Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board, is creating a safe space on the west side of Jacksonville's Urban Core to demonstrate urban agriculture, cultivate environmental stewardship and empower residents to build with nature for social, economic, and environmental health. We worked with the City of Jacksonville's Parks and Recreation department and local environmental organizations to develop an appropriate plan for a half-acre of previously contaminated public land near the Sugar Hill Mosaic along the S-Line link of Groundwork Jacksonville's Emerald Trail. We've hosted three educational workshops, regenerated soil, and installed a bioswale and pollinator garden. Over 150 volunteers have partnered with us this year. Together, we have established the District's first demonstration project on public land!



STEWARDSHIP WEEK CELEBRATION

We closed out Stewardship week with our 1st annual stewardship celebration at Regeneration Park where participants learned about our innovative green infrastructure and community stewardship project planned along the S-Line link of the Groundwork Jacksonville Emerald trail.



2021 NACD
Stewardship Week
Theme

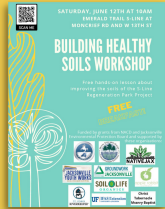


Thank you to Jacksonville City Council Member Ju'Coby Pittman for recognizing Soil & Water Stewardship Week in Duval County.



Green Infrastructure Workshops

At Regeneration Park, we partnered with local experts on a series of free "Building with Nature" workshops for our community. Complimentary breakfast and snacks were provided to attendees.



Building Healthy Soils

Community members learned about using natural processes to build healthy soils with local experts from Native Jax, Soil Life Organics, and Apple Rabbit Compost.

6/12



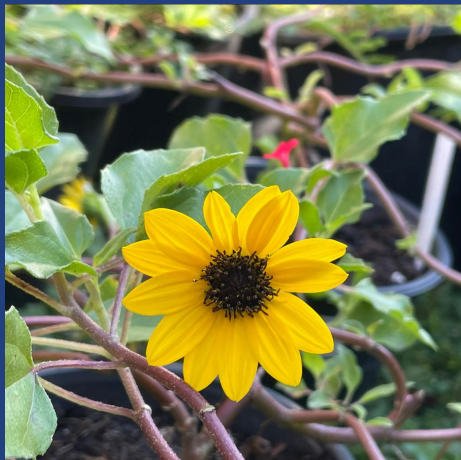
"When you see the DSWCD attached to something, you can be assured that excellence will be at the forefront of the opportunity."

-Tia Unthank
Jacksonville Science Festival, Community Engagement Director

Building a Bioswale

7/18

Jimmy Orth, Director of the St. Johns River Keeper, was on hand to teach the community about bioswales, and how farmers and landowners can use them to mitigate storm water runoff



Parks for Pollinators BioBlitz

Over a span of 4 days, 153 participants virtually joined our Urban Agriculture Coordinator and guest experts each morning for a live video about different pollinators in Jacksonville. Afterwards, they became citizen scientists and recorded 502 observations of 303 different species on the iNaturalist app under the Parks for Pollinators DSWCD 2021 project.

9/27- COJ Naturalist at **Hugenot Park**

9/28- Ixia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society Park Coordinator at **Native Park**

9/29- Duval Soil and Water Conservation District at **Julington-Durbin Preserve**

9/30- Dave The Plant Man at **Regeneration Park**

Volunteer Workdays



PLANTING A BIOSWALE

10-2



SPREADING MULCH

10-23



SEEDING COVER CROP

12-4

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are very crucial to our effectiveness and success. The following agencies and organizations contributed to the District's Plan of Operations through our Locally Led Partnership Program.

In 2021 the Duval Soil and Water Conservation District received over \$65,000 in new private donations and grants.



LOCAL SUPPORTERS

Being a government office without regular funding, The Duval Soil and Water Conservation District relies on support from local organizations. We would like to thank the following businesses, organizations, and individuals for their support.



ST. JOHNS RIVERKEEPER®

