

S. C. ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
CONFERENCE

REMARKS BY

GOVERNOR JAMES B. EDWARDS

DECEMBER 9, 1976

9:30 A.M.

CAROLINA INN

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

LET ME CONGRATULATE EACH OF YOU FOR PARTICIPATING
IN THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE. I NOTE WITH INTEREST
THAT THIS IS THE 36TH ANNUAL MEETING OF YOUR ASSOCI-
ATION.

BEFORE "ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION" BECAME AN ISSUE
OF WIDESPREAD INTEREST AND CONCERN, YOU AND YOUR
PREDECESSORS WERE ON THE JOB PROTECTING THE LAND
RESOURCES OF THIS STATE.

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AND COOPERATING LANDOWNERS
HAVE CHANGED THE "FACE" OF OUR STATE. THE HILLSIDES
OF THE PIEDMONT AND THE FLATLANDS OF THE COASTAL

PLAINS HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO PRODUCTIVE AND VALUABLE LANDS. THIS HAPPENED BECAUSE CONSERVATION PRACTICES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED ON MILLIONS OF ACRES OF THE LAND IN OUR STATE.

SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURE AND GOOD LAND ARE SYNONYMOUS. AMERICA'S GREATNESS IS DUE, IN A LARGE MEASURE, TO A GREAT AGRICULTURE. IN FACT, ANY NATION'S GREATNESS DEPENDS ON THE ABILITY TO SUPPLY ITS PEOPLE WITH THE BASIC SOURCE OF HUMAN ENERGY---FOOD!

WE ARE THE WORLD'S LEADING FOOD-PRODUCING NATION TODAY BECAUSE WE PROTECT OUR LAND . . . WE LEARNED

A HARD LESSON WITH THE SOIL EROSION TRAGEDY OF
THE THIRTIES. THE PEOPLE OF OUR STATE OWE A
GREAT DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU AT THE
"GRASSROOTS" LEVEL, WHO PROMOTE AND PRACTICE
BASIC SOIL CONSERVATION.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S CONSERVATION DISTRICTS ARE
UNIQUE. IT IS THE TRUE AMERICAN SPIRIT OF
"VOLUNTEERISM", EXEMPLIFIED BY 50,000 LAND-
OWNERS WHO HAVE CONSERVATION PLANS COVERING
APPROXIMATELY 9 MILLION ACRES OF THE STATE'S
LAND. THIS DID NOT HAPPEN WITHOUT LEADERSHIP.
CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS ARE MEN

AND WOMEN OF VISION AND DEDICATION.

COMMISSION DIRECTOR, JOHN PARRIS, TELLS ME THAT
FOR EVERY DOLLAR OF STATE FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO
HIS AGENCY, CONSERVATION COMMISSIONERS ARE CON-
TRIBUTING AN EQUAL AMOUNT IN TIME, PERSONAL EFFORT
AND EXPENSE PROMOTING CONSERVATION. THIS IS A
REMARKABLE DEMONSTRATION OF THE QUALITY OF
PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP THIS ORGANIZATION.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, THE
LAND RESOURCES COMMISSION, AND THE USDA-SOIL
CONSERVATION SERVICE, ALONG WITH OTHER COOPERATING
AGENCIES, ARE TO BE COMMENDED FOR THE GREATEST

"ENVIRONMENTAL SUCCESS STORY" IN OUR NATION'S
HISTORY. YOU ARE DOING A GREAT JOB AND I PLEDGE
MY SUPPORT AND BACKING.

LET ME DISCUSS SOME OF THE AREAS IN WHICH ALL
SOUTH CAROLINIANS SHOULD BE PROUD.

1) THE DUNCAN CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT IN
LAURENS COUNTY WAS SELECTED AS THE
"NATIONAL WATERSHED PROJECT OF THE
YEAR."

2) YOU HAVE RECEIVED NATIONAL RECOGNITION

FOR YOUR PROMOTION OF CONSERVATION ED-
UCATION FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS. I
CONGRATULATE THE YORK CONSERVATION
DISTRICT FOR RECENTLY BEING SELECTED AS
"RUNNER-UP" IN THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION
EDUCATION AWARDS PROGRAM.

- 3) EARLIER THIS YEAR, COMMISSIONER BEN
LEONARD OF GREENVILLE RECEIVED THE
NATIONAL CONSERVATION COMMUNICATIONS
AWARD.

THESE ARE OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR

ONE YEAR---AND I CONGRATULATE YOU!

- 4) I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT AFTER ONLY TWO YEARS, MINED LAND BEING RECLAIMED IS EQUAL TO THE ACREAGE BEING DISTURBED.

THIS SPEAKS WELL FOR THE MINING INDUSTRY

AND YOUR DEPARTMENT OF MINING AND

RECLAMATION.

ALSO, SOUTH CAROLINA IS A MEMBER OF THE

INTERSTATE MINING COMPACT COMMISSION.

I HAD THE DISTINCT HONOR OF SERVING AS

CHAIRMAN IN 1975. DURING THIS YEAR WE

INCREASED THE MEMBERSHIP FROM 9 TO 12
STATES. THIS ORGANIZATION IS NOW A MAJOR
FORCE IN ADVANCING THE PROTECTION AND
RESTORATION OF LAND, WATER AND OTHER
RESOURCES AFFECTED BY MINING. SOUTH
CAROLINA MUST SUPPORT THIS COMPACT.

- 5) AN EROSION CONTROL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
CONDUCTED BY THE LAND RESOURCES COMMISSION,
IN COOPERATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE STATE HIGHWAY
DEPARTMENT, FOR THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED
STATES WAS STARTED THIS YEAR. THIS PROJECT,

LOCATED ON I-77, IS PROVING TO BE VALUABLE
IN EVALUATING EROSION CONTROL METHODS.

OF CONSERVATION IN URBAN AREAS. AT THE

I RECOGNIZE, AS YOU DO, THAT THE PROBLEMS
OF EROSION AND FLOODING HAVE NOT BEEN
ELIMINATED. THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT URBAN
DEVELOPMENT ALSO HAS CONSERVATION-
RELATED PROBLEMS.

THE FUTURE WILL BE DETERMINED BY HOW WE

THE SAME APPROACH THAT HAS PROVEN SUCCESS-
FUL ON RURAL LANDS WILL WORK IN URBAN

AREAS. AN EXPANDING CHALLENGE FOR
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS IS THE PROMOTION
OF CONSERVATION IN URBAN AREAS. AT THE
SAME TIME, LET US NOT REDUCE OUR EFFORTS
IN CONSERVATION OF OUR VITAL AGRICULTURAL
LANDS.

SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE NATION NEED CON-
SERVATION DISTRICTS AS MUCH TODAY AS EVER.
OUR FUTURE WILL BE DETERMINED BY HOW WE
USE OUR LAND RESOURCES. LAND CONSERVATION
MUST CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR PRIORITY IN

OUR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DECISION-
MAKING PROCESS.

YOU HAVE A PROVEN RECORD OF SUCCESS AND
ACHIEVEMENT. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU
CAN AND WILL MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE
FUTURE!