A Section 319 Grant was established in 2007 in the Rabon Creek Watershed to help prevent water quality impairment. This grant focused on repairing failing septic systems and providing alternative livestock watering systems in the watershed. By the end of the project in November, 2010, $40,312.55 had been expended in septic system repairs and $76,845.00 had been expended in agricultural best management practices. A total of $217,239.00 was expended over the life of the project.

44 failing septic systems were repaired during this project. In addition, four agricultural facilities installed 14 watering facilities, 2 watering gaps, 1,560 feet of watering pipeline, 10,918 square feet of heavy use area protection, 22,215 feet of fencing, 152 feet of water control structure, and 1.5 acres of vegetative planting. The agricultural practices resulted in eliminating or restricting access by 320 head of livestock to the waterways of the watershed.
**PalmettoPride Grant helps beautify Laurens County**

Each year the PalmettoPride organization offers trees to municipalities and non-profit organizations to be planted in public areas. These trees are grown by the State Department of Corrections and are provided to help enhance the beauty of our State. The Laurens County Beautification Commission submitted a request in the fall of 2009 for 362 trees from this grant.

PalmettoPride awarded the Commission 145 trees for planting in Laurens County. The trees provided included Cherry Bark, Dogwood, Ginko, Leyland Cypress, Sweet Bay Magnolia, and Wax Myrtle. These trees were delivered in December of 2009 and were planted in a number of locations, including the Culbertson Backcountry Settlement, the Town of Gray Court, the Gray Court Community Park, the Town of Hickory Tavern, Clinton High School, the Presbyterian Home, and the Joe Adair Outdoor Education Center. The trees were planted by the members of the Beautification Commission.

In return for the trees PalmettoPride required that the Commission provide a report concerning the planting of the trees and that the Commission participated in the Great American Cleanup in the spring, which the commission was glad to provide for the beautiful trees.

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**LCCA Hosts Livestock Field Day**

The Laurens County Livestock Association held an educational field day at the farm of Joe Ben and Benji Hunter in Gray Court on June 17. Billy Moss, the Southeastern representative for the American Simmental Association, gave a presentation on genetics in the beef herd and how Simmental bulls could be utilized in a commercial cow-calf operation. A Pasture Management Systems Company representative discussed fencing and handling facilities for the commercial operation. Over 100 cattle growers from Laurens, Union and Spartanburg counties attended the field day.

The Laurens County Cattlemen’s Association holds monthly educational meetings year-round to provide timely information to local livestock producers. The organization currently has 66 members. Mike Loveless, Area Livestock Agent, serves as the Extension Advisor for this association.

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**Master Gardeners install Fence Garden**

The fall 2009 Master Gardener class project was to design and install a Carolina Fence Garden for the Laurens County Museum, located across the parking lot from the Laurens County Clemson Extension building. The class produced a landscape design, prepared the soil by killing existing weeds and tilling in soil amendments, mulched the entire area, planted mostly native plants according to specifications for a Carolina Fence Garden, and installed a split rail fence with design and wood supplied by Glenn Blocker from the Joe Adair Outdoor Education Center. All plants were donated by members of the class and the Laurens County Master Gardener Association. The mulch was free from a local landfill, and picked up and delivered by class members. Class members spent at least 7 half-days installing the garden. The garden at the museum will be maintained by the Laurens County Master Gardener Association as an on-going project.

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*PalmettoPride grant trees planted at the Culbertson Backcountry Settlement.*

*The Carolina Fence Garden beside the Laurens Museum.*
Extension provides Timber Tax Workshop

Federal income tax laws change on an annual basis, so being aware of these changes can be challenging. County Extension staff coordinated a webcast, open to citizens in Laurens and surrounding counties, of the Forestry and Natural Resources Department’s Continuing Education workshop. This workshop is designed to provide participants with the information needed to manage their own timber taxes and those who advise clients on tax strategies and implications up-to-date with the latest changes in the tax laws. The two day Workshop was held on November 10th and 11th to allow topics to be covered in-depth and to allow time for reviewing IRS forms.

Dr. Harry L. Haney, Jr. presented a portion of the training. Dr. Haney specializes as a consultant on forest management focusing on income tax, estate planning, and financial analysis. He is an adjunct professor with Clemson University. Also presenting was Dr. Tamara L. Cushing, Assistant Professor and Extension Forestry Specialist with Clemson University. Dr. Cushing specializes in forest economics, management, and taxation.

Laurens County hosts Miss 4-H Pageant

Laurens County 4-H Volunteer Leaders and the Laurens County Teen Council hosted the second annual Miss 4-H Pageant on Saturday, January 9, 2010 in the Thornwell Home for Children’s Gilliam Center in Clinton, SC. Approximately 150 family members, friends, and 4-H supporters attended the event. The pageant was held to raise funds to support Laurens County 4-H clubs, programs and leadership opportunities in the County, and also to sponsor the attendance of two Laurens County 4-H members to the Annual State 4-H Congress event.

The pageant had thirty-six contestants from eleven counties competing in five age divisions. The pageant had four divisions of competition: business attire, 4-H attire, formal attire, and questions. Two of the four divisions strictly targeted 4-H work and programs: the 4-H attire allowed the contestants to show the type of clothing they would wear for their 4-H project, and the question division asked the contestants an age-appropriate question about 4-H and/or their 4-H experiences. The judges scored the contestants on poise, stage presence, speaking skills, personality, and confidence.

Winners from Laurens County included Kala McClinton in the Miss 4-H Teen division (13-15 years old) and Jada Anthony and Anna Turner in the Little Miss Cloverbud division (5-7 years old).

Cooking Healthy, Eating Smart

Cooking Healthy, Eating Smart (CHES) is a USDA-funded partnership between Clemson University, the Medical University of SC and the SC Nutrition Research Consortium. The objective of the project is to develop of pilot a curriculum for older, rural South Carolinians to help them select and prepare adequate amounts of healthy foods as well as reduce chances of foodborne illness.

The curriculum was refined by focus groups across the state (including a group in Laurens County) with assistance from Rhonda Matthews, County Extension Agent. The final curriculum was implemented in numerous Area on Aging congregate meal sites across the state. Pending analysis of data, the outcomes expect to indicate that individuals enrolled in the project saw an improvement in their health status. Future funding for the Cooking Healthy, Eating Smart curriculum will investigate a Train the Team approach for local communities.
Laurens County 4-H held their annual banquet on Friday, March 19, 2010 to celebrate the outstanding hard work and dedication of its members. Approximately 200 4-H’ers, parents, volunteers and supporters attended the event. The evening was filled with fun, food and celebration. Carol Johnson was the guest speaker and related her experiences in Laurens County 4-H and how they made her the outstanding citizen she is today.

All 4-H members were recognized for their participation in Laurens County 4-H clubs and projects. They received a small token for this past year’s excellent effort.

Award winners were Mrs. April Wooten, who received the Rose Torrey Memorial Award for the 4-H Volunteer of the Year for her exceptional commitment and enthusiasm to the program; Miss Sara Pinson, who won the Laurens County Senior 4-H’er of the Year award, which is awarded to the outstanding 4-H’er between the ages of 14 and 18; Mr. Thomas McClinton, who won the Laurens County Junior 4-H’er of the Year award, which is awarded to the outstanding 4-H’er between the ages of 9 and 13; and Mr. Sam Wooten, who won the Maudelle Finley 4-H Spirit Award for his positive and upbeat attitude in everything he does.

4-H members and parents enjoy the 2010 4-H Awards Banquet.