

2026 Youth Conservation Poster Contest

Soil. Where it all Begins.



Soil is much more than the ground we walk on. It is the foundation of all life on Earth. Every plant, tree, and ecosystem depend on healthy soil to grow, thrive, and connect with the web of life. The 2026 [National Association of Conservation Districts \(NACD\)](#) Stewardship Theme, *Soil. Where it all Begins*, celebrates soil as a living, dynamic system that sustains us all and deserves our protection and care.

While often overlooked, soil plays a vital role in climate stability, food production, water filtration, and supporting biodiversity. Helping students understand soil and its complexity builds both scientific literacy and environmental responsibility.

The Newberry Soil & Water Conservation District invite K-12 students in Newberry County to dig into the world beneath their feet and create a poster illustrating soil as a living and vital system that supports life and calls for our stewardship.

Through the 2026 Youth Conservation Poster Contest, students can explore what soil is made of, discover the organisms that call it home, learn how it supports plant life, and understand ways to protect and care for it in their own communities.

Eligibility

Newberry County students in grades K-12 should submit their posters to the Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District for local judging by **Friday, May 15, 2026**. Students in other counties in SC should contact their [local conservation district](#) for entry deadlines and details.

Students' entries will be grouped by the following grade levels: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. When completing the [entry form](#), select the current grade level of the student for the 2025-2026 school year.

Rules

- **Size:** **11 x 17 inches** is preferred for durability (60 lb. to 90 lb. paper is suggested). We can provide up to 24 sheets of 11"x17" poster paper per school; contact: Crista Lukoski at Newberrysolandwater@gmail.com to request supplies.
- **Media:** Any traditional media may be used, including **paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal,**

stickers, paper, or other materials. Mixed media art is welcome.

- **Originality:** Posters must be **created by an individual student**—team projects are not permitted. Tracing or copying from photographs or other artists' works is not allowed.
- The **2026 Stewardship theme phrase, "Soil. Where it all Begins," must be included in full on the front of each poster** to be eligible for the national contest.
- While younger students may receive planning assistance from parents or teachers, NACD encourages each student to complete their own work.

Attach a signed entry form to the back of the poster. Student or school names must not appear on the front of the poster.

Poster Evaluation Criteria

Entries will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Conservation Message (50%):** The poster effectively conveys the theme and a clear conservation message.
- **Visual Effectiveness (30%):** The design is eye-catching, well-organized, and visually appealing.
- **Originality (10%):** The poster demonstrates creativity and fresh ideas.
- **Universal Appeal (10%):** The design should appeal to a broad audience and be easily understood.

Submission

Posters completed by Newberry County students should be delivered to the Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District by **Friday, May 14, 2026**. Posters may be dropped off in person or mailed to 719 Kendall Rd Newberry SC 29108. Posters should be packaged to remain flat when sent for judging.

Competition Progression and Awards

Newberry County winners will progress to the state competition in Fall 2026; state winners will progress to the national competition in Winter 2026. Cash prizes will be awarded at each level.

County Competition: \$25 prizes will be awarded to winning posters in each of five grade level categories. Cash prizes are sponsored by the Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District.

State Competition: \$50 prizes will be awarded to winning posters in each of five grade level categories. Cash prizes are sponsored by the SC Association of Conservation Districts.

National Competition: First place prizes in each grade level category will receive \$200; second place

posters will receive \$150; third place posters will receive \$100. Cash prizes are sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts Auxiliary, the Country Store at the NACD Annual Meeting, and individual donors.

Sponsors

[Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District](#)

[SC Association of Conservation Districts](#)

[National Association of Conservation Districts](#)

For more details on how to enter, contact Crista Lukoski at Newberrysoilandwater@gmail.com or (803) 597-3160