



CONSERVATION News

Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Summer 2010

Agriculture Field Day

By Beth D'Aquila, Editor

The Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District sponsored an Agriculture Field Day at the Harrison County Fairgrounds.

Some of the speakers and topics included: Patty Rogers, Coastal Plains RC&D - Cogongrass and Chemicals; Walter Jackson, NRCS Grazing Land Specialist - Pasture Production for Grazing Land; Mike Keene, MSU Extension Service Area Agent - Hayland Practices; Robert Johnson, Harrison County SWCD Commissioner - Grain Drill; Sarah Gatwood, MSU Extension Service - Equine Nutrition & Maintenance; Tyree Harrington,

NRCS District Conservationist - Landowner Assistance Programs. Harrison Co. SWCD Deputy Commissioner Paul Drake, DVM, was available for equine questions.

Door Prizes were provided by Fazzio's Home and Farm Center and Land Trust for the MS Coastal Plain.

Commissioner Robert Johnson did a fine job of being MC of the event, while volunteers Rusty Johnson and Linda Johnson cooked up a delicious catfish lunch for the participants. We also appreciate volunteers Chris Williams-White, Lynne Hill, and Babe Buckley for help with registration.



Bobby Ladner and Supervisor Kim Savant welcome landowners to the Harrison County Fairgrounds.



Commissioner Robert Johnson (left) and Deputy Commissioner Paul Drake (center) discuss the benefits of the grain drill to landowners.

Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats

Conservation of our natural resources is important in every community. Citizens are looking for ways to be involved at their homes, local schools or with community conservation projects. There are plenty of conservation habits that help conserve water, provide shelter for animals, birds and insects, as well as increase their food supplies. You can find habitats in forests, grasslands, deserts, wetlands, as well as right outside your backdoor and in your community.

Each of us can be good stewards of our natural resources on our land and in our communities. Conservation is careful

management of the environment and of our natural resources. When we think about protecting and managing our natural resources we can provide healthy habitats for the ecosystems on our planet.

A habitat is the place where something lives because it is adapted to find food, water, shelter, and space. It could be a plant, animal or other small organism. People, plants and animals all need a place to live and food to eat. Wherever you are you are in a habitat. People, plants and animals all need each other and they all need clean water, air and soil.

Mississippi Coastal Plains RC&D

By Patty Rogers, Coordinator

Mississippi Coastal Plains RC&D Council was fortunate enough to receive two Rural Business Enterprise Grants from USDA, Rural Development this year. They are both unique projects in the area, but can hopefully be replicated in other communities if funding is available.

The first project funded with ARRA funds through Rural Development is to retrofit a commercial kitchen/training center in Wiggins, MS. The kitchen will provide a certified facility for our blueberry producers to create and market value-added products from his blueberry operation. He will also manage the facility that will be available to other local producers for developing other value-added products for sale in the local farmers' markets. The kitchen will be available for "home-based" entrepreneurs to have a certified facility to use so that they can produce other food products, bakery items and catering in the small rural community where job opportunities are not readily available.

The kitchen will also be available for food safety training, for teaching adults and children how to make healthy food choices, and how to prepare food in a healthy manner. It will be used by the local school district, extension service, and 4-H & FFA programs. The facility will have areas for workshops, seminars and other classes.

The 2nd RBEG Grant is a Livestock Management Equipment grant for South Mississippi. Many small and/or limited resource livestock producers are unable to implement many critical production, management and marketing practices because they

do not have the equipment resources available to carry out those practices. This grant will provide access to that equipment for a low cost rental fee. The equipment will be managed by one young, beef cattle producer who will be responsible for the management, scheduling, and maintenance of the equipment as well as provide training to the producers on the use of the equipment/supplies. Items available for rent will include a portable corral system, portable squeeze chute, portable scales, pasture aerator, poultry litter spreader, branding irons and generator, hay moisture tester, dehorers, sheep shears, and cattle clippers. All items will also be available also to extension personnel, cattlemen's associations, 4-H, and FFA for teaching purposes, seminars and workshops. For information on the equipment, contact the manager, Rand Guthrie at 601.528.2440 or contact the RC&D Office at 601.528.5133, ext. 2.

In other RC&D news, the Mississippi Cooperative Weed Management Area had its first Board of Directors meeting with over 35 agencies and organizations signing the Memorandum of Agreement and cooperating on a statewide basis to work on invasive weeds throughout Mississippi. Dr. Victor Maddox was hired as the statewide Weed Management Coordinator. This has been a tremendous undertaking for the State of Mississippi to take the steps to create this Cooperative Board and hire a coordinator. This organization will provide a network of communication for all organizations and agencies to partner on projects, seek financial support and begin to make a difference in the battle to fight invasive weeds in Mississippi.

Out and About The County

By Dan Longino, Field Technician

Over the years, I've been told a number of tall (or at least standing on tip-toes) tales and hope to get some confirmation. One concerned the last of the "swamp turtles" which was caught and killed for meat in the Windy Hills swamp between School Road and Moran Road. It was too big to fit in the bed of a 1930's era pickup truck and its' head would not fit in a milk pail. Another tale was about the "Indian dance rings" in the Success area where youth danced in a line, until exhausted, at a festival every year and the resulting quarter-mile circles became so salty that little would grow in the area for a century. Just east of this area, a six-foot shark was once caught in freshwater Tuxachanie Creek miles inland from the Gulf.

I've heard many different talks about panthers, usually black and larger than any dog that tried to chase the cat. I never believed any of the ten-foot snake stories, until I saw and measured an eleven foot boa at Dr. Gingles pond site a few years back. Supposedly Crow Creek has a fourteen-foot alligator up above Saucier-Lizana Road. Supposedly herds of wild pigs used to

surround and kill pioneers and herds of alligators used to surround and kill herds of wild pigs!

I didn't turn my back on a certain farmer when I saw all the grasshoppers and lizards pinned on his barbed-wire fence until he showed me a small hawk fly up and "pin" another grasshopper to the fence. The bird had caught all the food in the fire-heated air of a nearby forest control burn.

I was once in Desoto National Forest a month after a control burn when I heard a loud "something in the bushes coming this way" noise and saw a pit bull-mix dog running and jumping through the woods. It would run a few yards, jump straight up in the air four or five feet and then run some more. Quicker than I could find a large stick, it ran close to me and jumped straight up to look at me and then went on running and jumping. Words don't quite describe how weird this was. Anyway, I welcome explanations and keep a small shovel nearby to clean up any complicated explanations.

Poster Contest Winners

The District’s Conservation Poster Contest was a success, with 500 entries in three categories. This year’s national Stewardship Week theme was “Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats”. We appreciate our Earth Team Volunteers: Linda Johnson, Calvinia Switzer, Darnita Harrington, Wilda Switzer, Babe Buckley and NRCS Melissa Russell who with great care looked over each poster to select the winners, and also made certificates for each student who participated.

2nd/3rd Grade Winners Countywide:
1st Place--Jaecie Watts, Lizana Elementary
2nd Place--Emily Miller, Crossroads Elementary
3rd Place--Raven Harris, Three Rivers Elementary



Josh Heinrich, English Pratt, and Nekal Deloach with Bayou View Middle School show their winning posters.

4th - 6th Grade Winners Countywide:
1st Place--English Pratt, Bayou View Middle School
2nd Place--Josh Heinrich, Bayou View Middle School
3rd Place--Breanna McDaniel, Lizana Elementary School

Special Education 2nd - 6th Grade Winners Countywide:
1st Place--Tesa Vance, Lizana Elementary School
2nd Place--Nekal Deloach, Bayou View Middle School
3rd Place--Olivia Keys, Bayou View Middle School

Congratulations to English Pratt of Bayou View Middle School, who’s poster went on to win at the South Area level, which consists of 24 counties!



Jaecie Watts, Breanna McDaniel, and Tesa Vance with Lizana Elementary School show their winning posters.

State Envirothon Champs - Harrison Central

Harrison Central High School recently won the State Envirothon! This is the first time in several years that a team in the South Area has won 1st Place, and we are very proud of the team and their sponsors for the tremendous amount of preparation and study it took to win.

Team members include: Chaz Ainsworth, Dylon Decoito, Ashton Needham, Chris Miceli, Mose Gill, Nathan Shuffitt. Each of these students received scholarships for \$825 and will participate in the Canon Envirothon at California State University at Fresno in August. Advisors for the team are Donnie Lott and Joel Alford.

Envirothon is a problem-solving natural resource competition for high school students. The competition tests their knowledge of aquatic ecology, forestry, soils/land use, wildlife, and current environmental issues.



Harrison Central High School’s Envirothon Team are the State Envirothon Champs! The teachers and team are pictured with Laura Beiser, MS Department of Environmental Quality.

Landowner Assistance Programs

By Tyree Harrington, District Conservationist

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program administered by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and was reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, agricultural producers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practice. Persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the EQIP program. EQIP activities are carried out according to a plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer that identifies the appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concerns. These practices are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions. Practices include watering facilities, heavy use areas, fencing, nutrient management, pest management, pasture and hayland planting.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) provides technical assistance and cost sharing to restore wildlife habitat.

In Mississippi, over 20 different conservation practices are available, ranging from winter water flooding to prescribed burning. Special priority is given to habitat that benefits species of national or state significance, including declining, threatened, and endangered species. Land eligibility for WHIP includes private agricultural land, non-industrial private forest land, and tribal land.

Anyone interested in participating in USDA programs must be an eligible producer. You must register your farm through the Farm Services Agency, (FSA) that services your county. For Harrison County, the FSA office is in Poplarville and can be reached at 601-795-4409, ext. 2. If you have not done so, you need to take a copy of your deed and the name and Social Security Number of everyone list on the deed to FSA. While there, you need to complete form CCC 926 Adjusted Gross Income.

For more information and applications on either of these programs, visit www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov or contact the NRCS office at the USDA Service Center in Gulfport at 831-0881, ext. 3.

Useful Landowner Websites

<http://hcswcd.co.harrison.ms.us>

www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov

www.msucares.com

<http://www.mswcc.state.ms.us>

<http://www.mcprcd.org>

<http://www.ltmcp.org>

www.fsa.usda.gov

<http://www.mfc.ms.gov>

<http://www.deq.state.ms.us>

<http://www.co.harrison.ms.us>

www.dmr.state.ms.us

www.gomdot.com

Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Mississippi Soil & Water Conservation Commission

Mississippi Coastal Plains RC&D

Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain

Farm Service Agency

Mississippi Forestry Commission

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

Harrison County

Department of Marine Resources

Mississippi Department of Transportation

Arbor Day Tree Giveaway

The Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District gave out over 4,500 free tree seedlings to celebrate Mississippi's Arbor Day. Species included: Bald Cypress, Native Pecan, Sawtooth Oak, Cherrybark Oak, and Southern Magnolia.

Special recognition to Dan Batson of GreenForest Nursery, who donated 500 Southern Magnolias to the District to distribute free on Arbor Day. GreenForest Nursery's generosity over the past years in donating Southern Magnolias has been tremendous. The landowners of Harrison Count are very appreciative.

We also appreciate Commissioners Paul McKay and Robert Johnson, along with our Earth Team Volunteers: Linda Johnson, Ed Longino, Joe Buckley and Babe Buckley who endured frigid cold along with NRCS Tyree Harrington and NRCS Dan Longino to make the District's Arbor Day Tree Giveaway such a success. Linda and Robert Johnson get extra thanks for making a delicious lunch of red beans and rice for the workers. Great job, team!



NRCS Tyree Harrington distributes tree seedlings to Gulfport Councilwoman Ella Holmes-Hines and Mary Thigpen on Arbor Day.



Earth Team Volunteer Linda Johnson assists a landowner with free trees on Arbor Day.



One of our littlest landowners and her mom enjoy receiving a Southern Magnolia provided by GreenForest Nursery.



Commissioner Robert Johnson, NRCS Dan Longino, and Commissioner Paul McKay assist landowners with free trees on Arbor Day.

Cogongrass Sprayer

A 20-gallon cogongrass sprayer is available to Harrison County landowners. To lease the sprayer, a lease agreement and refundable equipment deposit must be in the District office prior to use. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Please contact the District office at 831-1647 for further details and to schedule use. To report infestations of cogongrass, contact the District office.

Seed Grain Drill

A 7-foot seed grain drill is available to Harison County landowners. To lease the grain drill, a lease agreement and refundable equipment deposit must be in the District office prior to use. Rental fee is \$5 per acre based on acre meter reading plus \$10 per day. Please contact the District office at 831-1647 for further details and to schedule use.

7L Farms Field Day

In April, the District was asked to organize a Farm Field Day for the 2nd and 3rd grade students of Quarles Elementary. 7L Farms in Wiggins, owned by Jimmy Levens, was the site of this fun and educational field day. Topics included: Dairy, Incredible Journey, Forestry, Wildlife, Veggie Relay, Livestock, and Marine Debris.

Thanks goes out to NRCS, MSWCC, Stone County SWCD, MSU Extension Service, and Congressman Gene Taylor's office for providing the students with such enlightening and fun topics. The 170 Quarles students had a terrific time!

7L Farms is an Angus operation located on 3,000 acres in Wiggins, Mississippi.



Chris Lagarde, from Congressman Gene Taylor's Office, teaches students about conservation at the 7L Farms Field Day.



Brad Jones, from the MSU Extension Service, teaches students about cattle and horses at the 7L Farms Field Day.

Cinnamon Waffle Cookies

1/2 lb.	Butter
1 cup	Sugar
2 tsp	Cinnamon
3	Eggs
2 1/2 cups	Flour

Cream butter and sugar, beat in eggs one at a time. Add cinnamon. Work in enough flour to make a soft dough. Form into small balls. Place several balls on hot waffle iron, leaving space for them to spread when lid is closed. When cooked, remove and sprinkle with confectioners sugar.

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Conservation District**
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Tyree Harrington, District Conservationist
Dan T. Longino, Field Technician

The Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District holds a regular monthly board meeting on the first Thursday of each month. This meeting is open to the public and held at the District Office, 12238 Ashley Dr., Gulfport, at 11:30 a.m. This board meets to administer the program of soil and water conservation in Harrison County. An equal opportunity employer.

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