



CONSERVATION News

Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District

Vol. 28, No. 2

Fall 2010

Let's All "Go Garden"



These siblings enjoyed the "Go Garden" at the Gulf Coast Garden Show at the Coliseum, where the MS Association of Conservation Districts had a display. John Monroe, District Manager for Lamar County SWCD, shared his "Go Garden" concept, which makes container gardening at schools and assisted living facilities easy and fun.



(l-r) Tiffany Hart, Director of Biloxi Community Homes and Michael Southworth, resident, show Earth Team Volunteer Mary Boyd the growth of the "Go Garden" since she assisted in the planting two months ago. Coastal Plains RC&D donated the "Go Garden" and plants, while the District provided the potting soil and assistance.

Wildlife Workshop and Demonstration

Tuesday, September 28

Red Creek Wildlife Management Area

2671 Wire Road East in Perkinston

Registration 8:30 a.m.

**Deer Management and DMAP | Turkey Management | Cogongrass
Forestry/Burning | NRCS Programs | Food Plot Demonstration**

Lunch provided to all participants who RSVP by September 21.

RSVP Contacts: 831-1647 or beth.daquilla@ms.nacdnet.net

Lunch sponsored by George, Harrison and Stone County Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Sponsors: Soil & Water Conservation Districts; MS Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks; National Wild Turkey Federation; Coastal Plains RC&D, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Directions to this free program: Take Hwy 49 to Wire Road, turn east for 14 miles OR Take Hwy 26 to Hwy 15 south for 11 miles to Wire Road OR Take Hwy 15 North from D'Iberville for 19 miles to Wire Road.

Out and About The County

By Dan Longino, Field Technician

Got another call from a landowner complaining about a new “obnoxious” weed, a Japanese fern or morning-glory type vine that was strangling his corn crop. He had taken a one-week vacation and that was all it took for the vine to overcome his half-acre garden.

I’m often asked why there are not more community garden plots where those who don't own land could garden. Bottom line is there are a lot of background legal concerns and every successful public garden has at least one gardener-volunteer who has to dedicate every daylight hour to “fertilizing” good folks and weeding out troublesome folks.

There are some fine farmer's markets along the coast (Pass Christian-among others). A big concern is garden producers space sharing with flea-market vendors. The Coast has a history of getting through hard financial times with fishing and gardening (including a few chickens or goats, codes permitting).

There is an old truism that when a wise person dies, it’s as if a library burned down. We lost a few good “libraries” this summer with the passing of Madie and Norman Fairley. I once was privileged enough to sit on Miss Madie’s porch as she and

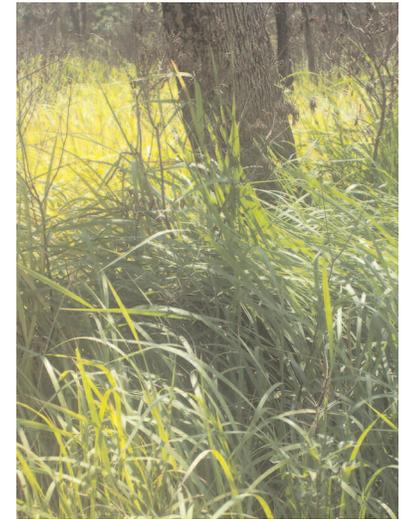
Mister Norman discussed Spanish moss and mud fireplace construction and genealogy with Manus Ladnier. Manus passed away years ago. He had been the son that stayed single and took care of his folks and like other Ladniers I have known, loved to study the history of one of the Coast’s strongest, most honest and hardworking families. (The best of all “libraries” I have ever been privileged to know is Ida Franke Ladnier Shaw, about whom not enough good things can be said).

On a trip to Brookhaven I saw patches of Cogongrass all along the route and a later trip to Jackson, I saw patches all the way to Collins. There will be a lot fewer people asking “What’s the big deal about Cogongrass” soon. We USDA types should have bumper stickers that say “Ask me about my Cogongrass” when we leave the southern counties of the state.

A shrimper friend told me he could pull his 90 foot steel hull boat out of the water and transport and anchor it on dry land at a waterfront lot for less than it cost him to elevate a small camper above potential hurricane floodwater. Can you picture a waterfront of Noah's arks bobbing in the water until the flood recedes? Install your floating barge/foundation if you can!



Cogongrass being sprayed along the roadway. Cogongrass is tremendously invasive and difficult to kill. This noxious weed has infested more than a million acres in the southeast. It grows 2' to 4' high creating dense mats that choke out native plants. If you have a Cogongrass infestation, there are programs available through Coastal Plains RC&D and MS Department of Agriculture. Both programs provide chemicals to landowners that qualify. We have both forms available at the District office.



Cogongrass is considered the 7th worst weed in the world.

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 Harrison 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.

NRCS Cost-Share Programs

by Tyree Harrington, District Conservationist

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.

Everyone 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. If you have not done so, you need to take a copy of your deed and the name and social security number of everyone listed on the deed to FSA. While there you need to complete form CCC 926 Adjusted Gross Income.

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) is a voluntary program established for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems to: 1) promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, 2) improve biodiversity; and 3) enhance carbon sequestration.

The federally listed threatened or endangered species targeted for habitat and population recovery activities in Mississippi are the gopher frog, gopher tortoise, and the black pine snake. The program will be offered in 14 counties including (Covington, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jones, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Stone and Wayne).

Benefits restoring and protecting forests contributes positively to the economy of our nation, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and improves environmental quality. Landowner protections will be made available to landowners enrolled in the HFRP who agree, for a specified period, to restore or improve their land for threatened or endangered species habitat. In exchange, they avoid future regulatory restrictions on the use of that land protected under the Endangered Species Act.

The program offers three enrollment options: 1) A 10-year costshare agreement, for which the landowner may receive 50 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices, 2) A 30-year easement, for which the landowner may receive 75 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 75 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices, or 3) A permanent easement, for which landowners may receive 100 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 100 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices.

To be eligible for enrollment, land must be private land or Tribal lands which will restore, enhance, or measurably increase the likelihood of recovery of a threatened or endangered

species, must improve biological diversity, or increase carbon sequestration.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). CSP offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and non-industrial forestland.

Voluntary conservation practices by producers are an essential part of our effort to improve soil and water quality. Broad and diverse participation in the CSP program will provide producers with many benefits such as enhancing wildlife habitat and helping to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Potential applicants are encouraged to use the CSP self-screening checklist to determine if the new program is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offices or on the NRCS web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html. CSP offers payments for adding conservation practices and maintaining and managing existing conservation practices.

Longleaf Pine Initiative (LLPI). Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) unveiled an initiative to improve the health of longleaf pine forests in nine southeast states, including Mississippi. Using an integrated landscape approach, this initiative restores longleaf pine forests on private lands and improves plant and animal habitat.

This collaborative, all-lands approach to conservation will result in cleaner water, improved critical habitat for sensitive species, and an economic resource for the future. Protecting and restoring this important ecosystem will benefit communities and resources across the nation.

Longleaf pine forests in the southeastern United States initially occurred on 90 million acres at the beginning of European settlement. About 3.5 million acres remain today, providing critical habitat for 29 threatened or endangered species. With the Longleaf Pine Restoration Initiative, NRCS will collaborate with other federal agencies as well as state, local and nongovernmental conservation partners to address conservation needs across the longleaf pine range.

The initiative is funded through NRCS's Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. Participants agree to carry out a wildlife habitat development plan and NRCS provides cost-share assistance to voluntarily implement conservation practices that maintain, improve or restore longleaf pine ecosystems.

For more information and applications on any of these NRCS cost-share programs, visit www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov or contact me at the NRCS office, located at 12238 Ashley Drive, Gulfport or call 831-0881, ext.3.

Forestry 101

by Ed Longino, Hancock/Harrison Forestry Association

President Leonard Nahlen introduced the speakers for the recent Forestry 101 Workshop. Judd Brooke spoke on longleaf management, Joe Pettigrew on consulting a forester for assistance, Butch Bailey covered southern pine beetles and firewise management, Russ Walsh discussed wildlife management, and Tyree Harrington discussed NRCS cost-share assistance.

Discussion questions and answers:

How are we controlling cogongrass today? We have been trying to control kudzu vines for the last fifty years. I expect to be trying to control cogongrass for the same period of time; kudzu and cogongrass are very difficult to control.

Why should I use a consulting forester? A consulting forester will carry out your management plan, market your timber and supervise the timber cutters and thus look after your timberland.

What is a good fruit tree to attract deer to your food plot?

Crabapples, pears, persimmons; these trees will need protection for the first years or else the deer will eat the leaves off the fruit trees.

Have any of you used heavy equipment to reduce brush in your forest land? Prescribe burning is the best choice and more economical. You must follow up heavy equipment with herbicide to kill the stubs still there after heavy equipment pushes or cuts the larger brush.

We all enjoyed the ice cream available, particularly Misty Sigler's hand-cranked butter pecan ice cream; thank you Misty.

Blueberry Cobbler

- 1 - 20 ounce can crushed pineapple (do not drain)
- 3 cups blueberries
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 1/2 sticks of butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Layer in 9" x 13" greased pan: pineapple, blueberries, sugar (save 3 tablespoons to mix with pecans), cake mix. Slice up butter or margarine and lay on top of cake mix (no lumps in cake mix, scatter butter around the top). Mix the 3 tablespoons of sugar with pecans and sprinkle on top. Bake 1 hour at 350 degrees and let cool for 15 minutes before serving.

Baked Jack Corn

- 2 large eggs - lightly beaten
- 1 1/2 cups sour cream
- 2 cups fresh corn kernels
- 18 ounces Monterey Jack cheese-cubes or shredded
- 1/2 cup soft bread crumbs
- 1 can chopped green chilies - drained
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese - shredded

Combine eggs and sour cream in a large bowl; stir in corn and add remaining ingredients except cheddar cheese. Pour mixture into greased 10-inch baking dish. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 35 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese and bake 5 more minutes or until cheese has melted. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Makes 6 servings.

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The Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District

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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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