



Conservation News

Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District

Vol. 30, No. 2

Spring 2012

Rotten Bayou Watershed Cost-Share on Agricultural Lands

By Patrick Vowell, MSWCC

Rotten Bayou has been selected as a priority watershed for restoration by the MS Department of Environmental Quality. Rotten Bayou is a 22,466 acre watershed located in Harrison and Hancock counties. The land uses in the watershed include 50% timberland, 25% pastureland, and 25% urban, wetlands and other.

The MS Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the MS Soil and Water Conservation Commission (MSWCC), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Harrison and Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation Districts decided an impact on water quality could be made, and MSWCC submitted a proposal to apply best management practices (BMPs) within this watershed on agricultural lands.

The objectives of this 319 project will be:

- To improve water quality and protect high quality water by demonstrating the economic benefits and effectiveness of selected BMPs in targeted areas
- To apply BMPs to agricultural lands in the project area so as to reach the desired outcome of reduced runoff, cattle access to the streams/nutrients and sedimentation
- To inform and educate the public about the BMPs that benefit water quality

The Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District will be implementing this 319 cost-share program on agricultural lands in the Harrison County portion of Rotten Bayou Watershed. This program will be a 60/40 match cost-share program. Some of the available BMPs to landowners within this watershed are as follows but not limited to:

Pasture and Hay Land Planting, Establishment of Permanent Vegetation, Nutrient Management, Heavy Use Area Protection, Fencing, Critical Area Planting, Tank/Troughs, Ponds (alternative water source), Water and Sediment Control Basins, Tree and Shrub Establishment, Forest Harvest Trails and Landings, and Vegetative Barriers.

To learn more about how AGRICULTURAL lands can benefit from this cost-share project, make plans to join us on Monday, April 9 at 11:00 a.m. at the Diamondhead Community Center. Representatives from lead agencies will be on hand to give an informative program and answer any questions. An RSVP by April 2 is a must for meal preparation. Contact 831-1647 or beth.daquilla@ms.nacdnet.net.

This is a three year project and is scheduled to end September of 2014. Applications will be taken at the Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District, 12238 Ashley Drive, Gulfport, MS 39503. For further information, please contact the office.



Harrison County SWCD had a productive year in 2011. See the Annual Report on pages 2-3 for more information about our projects.

(Left) Lance Middleton teaches students the importance of clean water at the Conservation Education Field Day at the Harrison County Farm.

(Above) Dan Longino inspects the completed project of the Flat Branch Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) project done to NRCS specs.

Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report

Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District

It is with great pleasure that the Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District is able to present its' 66th Annual Report.

ConservatioNews has been most helpful over the past 29 years in relaying vital conservation information to the citizens of Harrison County. This award-winning newsletter is sent to landowners, schools, organizations, and businesses. ConservatioNews is also on the District's web site: <http://hcswwcd.co.harrison.ms.us>

The coordinated efforts of the District and working partner, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), provided assistance to landowners, "Helping People Help the Land".

The District and NRCS surveyed Harrison County for possible Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) projects. One criteria for EWP projects is 4 inches of rain in 24 hours, with public or private structures being endangered by erosion. In Harrison County, there is \$1,119,300 funded in EWP projects.

The District provides assistance to landowners with soil maps, aerial photographs, flood plain maps, topographic maps, digitized soil survey, and a plat directory of Harrison County. Technical assistance is available on cogongrass control, soil erosion, stormwater runoff, pond layout, pond renovations, dry fire hydrants, healthy forests, agriculture, among others.

The District was actively involved with MS Coastal Plains Resource Conservation and Development (MCPRCD) which worked closely with the Harrison County Road Department in their effort to control cogongrass, which is the 7th worst weed in the world. Nearly 590 acres of cogongrass on county roadsides were treated at a value of \$29,857. Harrison County Board of Supervisors dedicated a \$20,000 grant for this project. Fifty private landowners received chemicals to spray nearly 190 acres from MCPRCD with a value of over \$4,700. MCPRCD provided contract spraying on 71 acres for a total value of \$5,800. The District has a 20-gallon cogongrass sprayer available to landowners and has cogongrass chemical application forms.

The District has available to landowners a 7-foot seed grain drill. We appreciate Supervisor Kim Savant and the staff at the Lyman Work Center for storing and maintaining the grain drill. The grain drill has been a real benefit to Harrison County.

Mississippi's Arbor Day - always the 2nd Friday of February, proved to be quite busy. Arbor Day tree seedling distribution started with 5,000 hardwood seedlings being distributed free to landowners at the District office.

The District sponsored a Farm Field Day for the 1st and 2nd grade students of Quarles Elementary at 7L Farms. The 200 students learned about Soils, Wildlife, Livestock, Marine Debris, Dairy, and the Water Cycle.

The District sponsored Envirothon Teams from Harrison Central High School, Biloxi High School, and D'Iberville High School in the South Area Envirothon. Envirothon tests students' knowledge of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and current issue.

Conservation Youth Camp scholarships were provided to three students in Harrison County, all Envirothon Team members.

"Forests for People" was the national theme for the Soil and Water Stewardship Poster Contest. The District received 400 posters from students in categories 2nd/3rd grades and 4th-6th grades. Each participant received a certificate and stewardship bookmark. Many thanks to our Earth Team Volunteers who sorted, judged, and made certificates for each participant.

The District sponsored their Conservation Education Field Day for the 4th grade students of Harrison County at the Harrison County Sheriff's Department County Farm. Over 400 students enjoyed hands-on learning about the water cycle, soils, wildlife biology, urban forestry, recycling, natural resources, non-point source pollution and "This Land is Your Land".

Rotten Bayou watershed was submitted for 319 funding through MS Department of Environmental Quality and MS Soil & Water Conservation Commission for cost-share practices on agricultural land.

District sponsored a Spring Garden Workshop that showcased Vegetable Gardening in Containers, Vermicomposting, and Soil Testing.

District worked with MS Renaissance Garden to distribute hundreds of flower bulbs and hundreds of vegetable/herb packets to landowners.

District assisted MS Association of Conservation Districts' booth at the Gulf Coast Garden Show.

District personnel took part in a Land Trust work day at Henderson Point and a beach clean-up of two miles with the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

District worked with National Wild Turkey Federation staff to promote wise stewardship through the Longleaf Pine Initiative.

District sponsored a Project WILD Teachers' Conservation Workshop for a dozen teachers, providing the books and CEU's.

District participated in the Feds and Farmers Feed Families program. Earth Team Volunteers were instrumental in collecting and donating food to the local food pantries.

District co-sponsored a book in progress through MGCCC and Coastal Plains RC&D titled, "Watershed & Me A-Z" which will emphasize what you would find in our local watersheds.

District participated in several school programs on, "Longleaf & Me A-Z". This book is produced through MGCCC, Coastal Plains RC&D, and other sponsors, and shows students what they would find in the MS Coastal Plains.

Commissioner Paul McKay served as Chairman of the MS Soil & Water Conservation Commission Board and Treasurer of the MS Association of RC&D Councils Board.

Commissioner Greg Crochet served on the MS Association of Conservation Districts Board and the National Association of Conservation Districts Committee for Coastal Issues.

District worked with cities, county, and environmental agencies on an Urban Restoration Assessment of Harrison County.

Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report

Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District



Commissioner Greg Crochet enjoyed making friends and giving away trees during the District's Arbor Day Tree Giveaway.



Cogongrass remains an invasive nuisance in Harrison County, but measures have been taken by the Board of Supervisors, District, NRCS, Coastal Plains RC&D, and MS Dept. of Agriculture to control it.



The District and NRCS worked on major Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) projects, including Duckworth Road bridge.

Accomplishments in Technical Assistance Fiscal Year 2011

Customers Benefited by Technical Assistance Technical Information, and Conservation Education	18,000
Units of Government Assisted	30
Individuals, Groups, and Units of Government Applying One or More Conservation Practices	45

Land Benefited by Practice Application

Cropland Benefited	324 acres
Grassland Benefited	2,432 acres
Woodland Benefited	1,784 acres
Wildlife Habitat Benefited	80 acres
Urban Land Benefited	11,000 acres
Assistance on Locating Hydric Soils	60
Topo and Aerial Photo Site Assistance	55

Projects Funded

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Projects	\$1,119,300
Efforts to Control Cogongrass on Public/Private Land	\$70,080
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	\$21,301
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	\$1,597

NRCS Support

Through the District, NRCS Provided 2 Conservationists, Office Space, 2 Vehicles, Office Equipment/Supplies	\$200,000
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Conservation Planning

Special Land Use Plans	10
Conservation Plans	40
Total Acres Planned	8,600

The People's Garden at Woolmarket Elementary

By Beth D'Aquila, Editor

The District is proud to announce that their efforts to partner with Woolmarket Elementary to provide a grant for a People's Garden is a success! Working with gifted teacher Shirley Hardman, the greenhouse is a real benefit to the students by teaching them a love of gardening, and will eventually provide fresh vegetables and herbs. Many students that attend Woolmarket Elementary, or any school for that matter, do not have the opportunity to plant something and watch it grow.

The District worked with ETV Dr. Christine Coker, MSU Coastal Research on supplies needed to make the People's Garden a viable asset to the school. Dr. Gary Bachman, MSU Coastal Research has also been working with the students on their gardening skills. The students are only too happy to participate.

I can tell you from visiting the school that the courtyard has many green-spaces along with the greenhouse, and a small garden out back. They also have a compost box, earth box, and a rain barrel. It's a wonderful sight to see students so excited to be outside and enjoying nature.

As with many schools along the coast, Woolmarket Elementary participates in the 'food backpacks' which are sent home on weekends with students in need of food. Once the garden is established, plans are to supplement with fresh foods.

Gardening truly is an activity that you can reap what you sew, and a benefit to all who participate. NRCS is promoting People's Gardens as an important tool for teaching children about healthy eating and active lifestyles.

With the success of Woolmarket Elementary, the District hopes other schools will be inspired to start/continue gardening. If your school would be interested in a grant from the District for a People's Garden, please contact Beth D'Aquila at 831-1647 or beth.daquila@ms.nacdnet.net.

Teacher Environmental Education Workshops

By Hiram Boone, Chairman, Southeast MS RC&D Council

The Southeast MS Resource Conservation and Development Council and William Carey University are sponsoring the 2012 Teacher Environmental Education Workshops to be held on June 11 -13, 2012 at William Carey University, Hattiesburg, MS. These 5-6 hour workshops are open to all teachers in grades K-12. The workshops will provide teachers the opportunity to earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for each individual workshop. William Carey University will issue the CEUs on behalf of the Southeast MS RC&D.

If you are a teacher in Harrison County interested in attending one or more of these workshops, please contact the Harrison County SWCD at 831-1647 or beth.daquila@ms.nacdnet.net for scholarship availability.

Registration deadline is May 18. Registration will be accepted on a first come basis. You may register for one workshop each day. There will be a class minimum of 15 participants and class maximum of 25 participants. Registration includes materials, lunch and CEUs certificate.

Project Food, Land & People

9:00 a.m - 3:30 p.m. June 11, \$48

Flying Wild

9:00 a.m - 3:30 p.m. June 11, \$48

Project Learning Tree

9:00 a.m - 3:30 p.m. June 12, \$48

Celebrating Birds

9:00 a.m - 3:30 p.m. June 12, \$48

Waste-in-Place

9:00 a.m - 3:30 p.m. June 13, \$48

Project Wild

9:00 a.m - 3:30 p.m. June 13, \$48



The Harrison County SWCD recently provided a grant to Woolmarket Elementary to purchase a greenhouse and establish a People's Garden. Students Cheyenne Bosarge, Avery Sumrall, and Lexi Page show some of their crop with District Commissioner Paul McKay and Earth Team Volunteer Dr. Christine Coker, MSU Coastal Research & Extension Service.



Woolmarket Elementary gifted teacher Shirley Hardman and Earth Team Volunteer Dr. Christine Coker, MSU Coastal Research and Extension Service, discuss plans for "Frog Hollow". Their efforts to work with the students to beautify the courtyard with a variety of trees, plants and flowers is remarkable.

Adopt-A-Stream Mississippi

by Debra Veeder

The Mississippi Wildlife Federation along with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality will hold a 2-day Adopt-A-Stream workshop at Seashore United Methodist Assembly, 1410 Leggett Dr., Biloxi, MS on June 12-13.

Adopt-A-Stream is a program that promotes environmental stewardship through training workshops, outdoor field activities and by introducing participants to watershed action projects.

The two-day program provides an in-depth study of watersheds as well as hands-on training in chemical and biological parameters important to a healthy stream. A watershed characterization tool, using the latest in Geographic Information Technology, will examine the conditions of different watersheds. In addition, the workshop will:

- Increase awareness of nonpoint source pollution
- Introduce surveying and mapping of your watershed
- Introduce Scenic Streams in Mississippi
- Introduce possible actions that can be taken to help your watershed, such as:

Storm Drain Marking

Stream Cleanups

Participation in World Water Monitoring Day (WWMD)

Who Should Participate? Environmental educators, land managers, Scout troop leaders, Envirothon Team Advisors, watershed team leaders, etc. For teachers, 2 CEU credits are available. Teachers contact the District at 831-1647 or beth.daquilla@ms.nacdn.net for scholarship availability.

Registration will be available on the Mississippi Wildlife Federation/Adopt-A-Stream website; www.mswildlife.org or by contacting Debra Veeder, Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator at (601)605-1790 or dveeder@mswf.org. Registration deadline is May 25. Cost of workshop is \$50.

Agriculture/Outreach Field Day

Wednesday, April 11 at 9:30 a.m.

DVM Jacqueline Broome's Bowie River Farm
27580 West Dubuissou Road, Pass Christian

Join NRCS and the District, as well as Farm Service Agency and ASU Extension Program, for this free and informative field day.

Topics will include: Conservation Programs, Conservation Technical Assistance, County Committee Elections, Disaster Programs, Farm Lending, Record Keeping, Small Farmer Loans, Grain Drill, Cogongrass, Equine, and will also include a tour of EQIP Practices.

Lunch will be served for those who RSVP for headcount no later than April 4. Contact office at 831-0881, ext. 3 or beth.daquilla@ms.nacdn.net to RSVP.

Directions to Bowie River Farm: From I-10 Kiln-Delisle exit go north 2.5 miles to turn right onto West Dubuissou Road. Farm is 2 miles east of Kiln-Delisle Road. From I-10 Minge Avenue exit go north 2 miles to West Dubuissou Road, turn left and proceed 3 miles to farm, crossing Vidalia Road. From Neco's grocery on Cable Bridge and Vidalia Roads, go south on Vidalia Road for 3 miles and turn right onto West Dubuissou Road and proceed 1.8 miles to farm.

Cogongrass in South Mississippi

by Coastal Plains RC&D

Numerous partners have waged a long term battle against cogongrass on public and private lands in this area. In the early years just identifying this extremely invasive weed was top priority. Its unique bloom in early spring makes identification that time of year much easier. The bloom looks like a long slender dandelion-white, puffy seeds that are so light that winds and animals can actually carry it for miles - just one of the reasons it has become so invasive and difficult to control. Later in the year, it can be more difficult to identify, but once you've learned its characteristics, you'll see it everywhere!



Cogongrass is deadly to pasture, timberlands, and roadsides by choking out all other vegetation. Suppression and control treatments must be implemented as soon as possible after identifying sites. Because of its unique biology that allows it to spread from seeds above ground and from stolens (root segments) underground, chemical treatment can be difficult to implement. All of this makes education on recommended treatments and positive identification extremely important for all landowners and residents.

The Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District office has forms for cogongrass chemicals from Coastal Plains RC&D and MS Department of Agriculture, contact us at 831-1647.

Cogongrass Sprayer

A 20-gallon cogongrass sprayer is available to Harrison County landowners courtesy of the District. 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 for more details, schedule use or to report infestations of cogongrass, at 831-1647.

*In the end we will conserve only what we love,
love only what we understand,
and understand only what we are taught.*

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides financial assistance for their agricultural enterprises to beginning farmers and ranchers and those qualifying as "limited resource." Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median farm size.

Information about loans to "limited resource" farmers, loan applications and other materials are available at the FSA office or at www.fsa.usda.gov.

The FSA Field Office in Poplarville covers: Pearl River, Hancock, Stone, and Harrison County. For further information on FSA programs, contact: Deborah C. Smith, County Executive Director, 310 Hwy 26 E, Poplarville, MS 39470 or call FSA at 601-795-4409, ext. 2.



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.

Conservation Districts have been involved in delivering locally driven conservation across America for more than 70 years. Among other things, Districts help: implement farm, ranch, and forestland conservation practices to protect soil productivity, water quality, air quality and wildlife habitat; conserve and restore wetlands; protect groundwater resources; assist communities and homeowners to plant trees and other vegetation; guide developers in controlling soil erosion; and provide technical expertise to landowners to identify, apply for, and participate in conservation programs.

Mississippi Gulf Shrimp Dip

1 lb.	MS Gulf shrimp (boiled, peeled & chopped)
2 tbsp.	Chopped green onions
8 oz.	Cream cheese
1 cup	Mayonnaise
1/2 tsp.	Garlic powder
1 tsp.	Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp.	Tabasco

Mix all ingredients and serve with crackers or bread.

REDUCE • REUSE • RECYCLE

Conservation News

Published by
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Soil & Water Conservation District**
12238 Ashley Drive • Gulfport, MS 39503
(228) 831-1647

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Beth D'Aquila, Editor & District Coordinator
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.

Visit the Harrison County
Soil and Water Conservation
District website at
<http://hcsxcd.co.harrison.ms.us>