

# CONSERVATIONNews

Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District

Vol. 27, No. 4

Winter 2009

## 2009 Annual Report Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District

It is with great pleasure that we are able to present to you, the citizens of Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District, our 64th Annual Report. That's right, the District was established in 1945.

ConservationNews has been most helpful over the past 27 years in relaying vital conservation information to the citizens of Harrison County. This award-winning quarterly newsletter is printed and emailed to individuals, organizations, and schools, and distributed to businesses and libraries. ConservationNews is also on the District's web site: <http://hcsxcd.co.harrison.ms.us>

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

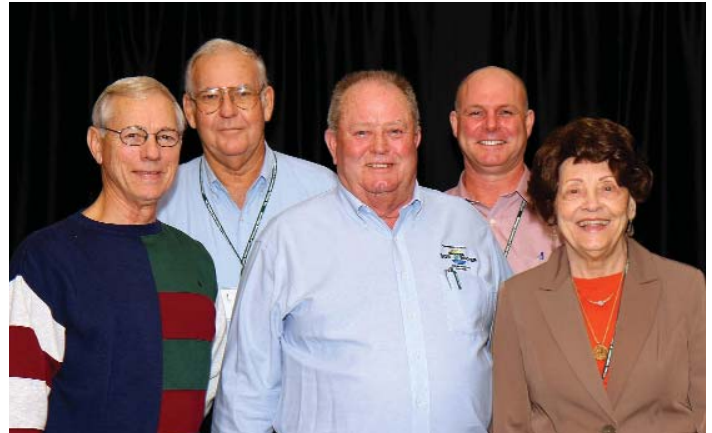
The District and NRCS surveyed Harrison County for possible Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) projects. One criteria for EWP projects is 4" of rain in 24 hours, with public or private structures being endangered by erosion. Since Hurricane Katrina, Harrison County has received over \$2,300,000 in EWP funds for these projects.

The District provides technical assistance with soil maps, aerial photographs, flood plain maps, topographic maps, digitized soil survey, and quad maps of Harrison County. Technical assistance is also available on cogongrass control, soil erosion, stormwater runoff, surface mine reclamation, pond layout and renovations, dry fire hydrants, healthy forest, 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 eradicate cogongrass, which is the 7th worst weed in the world. Almost 400 acres of county roadsides were treated in 2009. Harrison County Board of Supervisors dedicated a \$20,000 grant for this project. Private landowners received chemicals to spray nearly 400 acres from MCPRCD and MS Dept. of Agriculture with a value of over \$20,000. The District has a 20-gallon cogongrass sprayer available to Harrison County landowners.

With thanks to the Harrison County Board of Supervisors and the MS Soil & Water Conservation Commission, the District was able to purchase a 7-foot seed grain drill, which is available to Harrison County landowners, as well as to the county and cities. We appreciate Supervisor Kim Savant and the staff at the Lyman Work Center for storing and maintaining the grain drill. The District held a Grain Drill-Cogongrass Workshop which was well-attended and also featured information on firewise, soil testing, grazing land, crops, and tree identification.

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*District Commissioners Buck Johnson, Paul McKay, Robert Johnson, Greg Crochet, and Edie Dreher represent over 100 years of combined conservation service to Harrison County.*



*Teacher Helen Donohoe's class takes part in National Arbor Day by planting a tree at Three Rivers Elementary with Tyree Harrington.*



*District Commissioner Buck Johnson discusses the benefits of the Grain Drill with Supervisor Kim Savant, Vaughn Koehn, and Supervisor Marlin Ladner.*

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Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District*

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 also donated trees to the cities, county, and schools of Harrison County.

The District sponsored Envirothon Teams from Harrison Central High School and Biloxi High School in the South Area Envirothon, with qualifying teams able to participate in the Mississippi Envirothon. The Envirothon competition tests their knowledge of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and current issue.

“Dig It! The Secrets of Soil” was the national theme for the NACD Soil and Water Stewardship Poster Contest. The District received over 530 posters from students in categories 2nd/3rd grades and 4th-6th grades. Each participant received a certificate and ‘Dig It!’ bookmark.

In observance of National Arbor Day, the District and Earth Team Volunteers planted trees on public land in the county and each city in honor of our Military, Earth Team Volunteers, Children of the Gulf Coast and those whose lives were changed by Hurricane Katrina. Trees were also planted in memory of Commissioners Gene House and Max Miller.

The District held their annual, “Landscaping with Wildflowers” program, where participants listened to informative programs on hummingbird gardening and Vermicomposting.

The District is working on an anti-litter campaign to beautify our roadways, neighborhoods, nature areas and waterways.

The District hosted the South Area Earth Team Volunteer Workshop, which includes the southern 24 counties. Participants gathered to discuss volunteer opportunities and be recognized for their volunteer efforts.

The District attended the MACD South Area Meeting, and received recognition for their contributions to the conservation of our natural resources. Awards the District received include: Outstanding Woodland Conservation, Outstanding Commissioner Paul McKay, and Outstanding NRCS Employee Dan Longino.

The District and Earth Team Volunteers worked on the “Cans for Cupboards” non-perishable food drive. Over 200 items were collected and donated to the local food pantries.

As part of the Soil & Water Conservation Society, the District took part in the MS Gulf Coast Beach Cleanup, cleaning 1 1/4 miles of beach in Long Beach.

Taking part in a Community Outreach Meeting, the District coordinated with agencies such as NRCS, Farm Service Agency, and Rural Development to meet with the public to discuss possible grants to landowners.

We are grateful to all the individuals, groups, and agencies who have contributed to our progress during Fiscal Year 2009. Special recognition is extended to the Harrison County Board of Supervisors for their continued support of District funding as well as the City of Biloxi, City of D’Iberville, and City of Gulfport, City of Long Beach, and City of Pass Christian.

## Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts

*by Beth D’Aquila, Editor*

At the recent Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) Annual Meeting in Jackson, the theme was ‘65 Years and Going Strong!’. The Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District is also proud to have served Harrison County residents with 65 years of conservation of our natural resources.

Harrison County was well-represented at the MACD Meeting, and also received three statewide awards: 2009 MACD Outstanding Newsletter, 2009 MACD Outstanding District in Woodland Conservation, and NRCS Chief’s Earth Team Field Award. It took a lot of teamwork between the District, Earth Team Volunteers, and Natural Resources Conservation Service to receive these awards.



*NRCS State Conservationist Homer Wilkes (far left) and NRCS Chief Dave White (far right) present the Chief’s Earth Team Field Award to ETV - Linda Johnson, SWCD-Beth D’Aquila, and NRCS - Tyree Harrington.*



*MACD President Sam Newsom presents the 2009 MACD Outstanding District in Woodland Conservation Award to District Commissioner Buck Johnson.*

# Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report

## Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District

### Accomplishments in Technical Assistance Fiscal Year 2009

Customers Benefited by Technical Assistance  
Technical Information, and Conservation Education . 18,200

Units of Government Assisted . . . . . 32

Individuals, Groups, and Units of Government  
Applying One or More Conservation Practices . . . . . 44

### Land Benefited by Practice Application

Cropland Benefited . . . . . 464 acres

Grassland Benefited . . . . . 2,164 acres

Woodland Benefited . . . . . 1,150 acres

Wildlife Habitat Benefited . . . . . 171 acres

Urban Land Benefited . . . . . 11,000 acres

Nature Study Areas Benefited . . . . . 5

Assistance on Locating Hydric Soils . . . . . 100

Topo and Aerial Photo Site Assistance . . . . . 125

### Projects Funded and Completed

Forest Heights Subdivision Levee Restoration . . . . \$672,000

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Projects . . \$ 65,000

Efforts to Eradicate Cogongrass on Public Lands . . \$ 20,000

Efforts to Eradicate Cogongrass on Private Lands . . \$ 20,000

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) . . \$ 15,000

### NRCS Support

Through the District, NRCS Provided  
3 Conservationists, Office Space,  
3 Vehicles, Office Equipment/Supplies . . . . . \$ 250,000

### Conservation Planning

Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Reports . . . . . 25

Special Land Use Plans . . . . . 10

Conservation Plans . . . . . 40

Total Acres Planned . . . . . 8,600



*District Commissioner Greg Crochet and NRCS Area Conservationist Wesley Kerr discuss the restoration of the Forest Heights levee .*



*To celebrate Mississippi's Arbor Day, the District gives away free tree seedlings on the second Friday of February each year.*



*Under the direction of the Harrison County Board of Supervisors, Homer McKnight and Bobby Weaver, Road Department Managers, have worked diligently in their efforts to eradicate cogongrass on county roadsides.*

# Arbor Day Tree Giveaway

**Friday, February 12, 2010**  
**7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (while supplies last)**

**Location:**

Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District  
12238 Ashley Drive, Gulfport (Hwy 49, two miles north of I-10;  
turn at Rug Decor and come straight back)

**FREE Seedlings Include:**

Bald Cypress, Native Pecan, \*Southern Magnolia,  
Sawtooth Oak & Cherrybark Oak

Each household will receive a variety pack;  
schools and nature areas also welcome.

No need to call to reserve trees; first come, first served basis.

\*Southern Magnolia seedlings donated by  
GreenForest Nursery in Perkinston

# CONSERVATIONNews

Published by

**The Harrison County Soil & Water  
Conservation District**

**12238 Ashley Drive • Gulfport, MS 39503**  
**(228) 831-1647**

**Commissioners**

Buck Johnson, Chairman

Paul McKay, Vice Chairman

Gregory V. Crochet, Secretary-Treasurer

Edie Dreher, Member

Robert Johnson, Member

**Deputy Commissioners**

Lawrence Milner

Regina Lawrence

**Staff Assisting the District**

Beth D'Aquilla, Editor/Information & Education

Tyree Harrington, District Conservationist

Nikesha Wells, Soil 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>

# Grain Drill at Gulfport VA

*by Beth D'Aquilla, Editor*

Gus Wesson, Landscape Manager with the City of Gulfport, reported that the District's 7-foot grain drill was used to plant over 9-acres of Bermuda and Rye grass seed on the north part of the former Veterans Affairs property in Gulfport. The purpose of the project was to provide an open play area and/or athletic field area, primarily soccer, for the citizens of Gulfport. In addition to the seed, irrigation was also installed. The site is expected to be in use this spring.

Godfrey 'Slim' Davis, Lead Beautification Coordinator, was the equipment operator. Slim has over 20 years with the city and is known for his equipment operating proficiency.

Gus goes on to say that it has been a thrill and great benefit to the city to have the opportunity to use this piece of equipment. Gulfport's Department of Public Works plans to use the grain drill again in the early spring to help jump start the wildflower program along Hwy 605 and Hwy 49.



*The City of Gulfport recently used the District's 7-foot grain drill on the former VA property. Godfrey "Slim" Davis, Lead Beautification Coordinator, was the equipment operator.*

## Triple-Layer Mud Pie

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 3 squares     | BAKER'S Semi-Sweet Chocolate, melted            |
| 1/4 cup       | canned sweetened condensed milk                 |
| 1             | OREO Pie Crust (6 oz.)                          |
| 1/2 cup       | chopped PLANTERS Pecans, toasted                |
| 2 cups        | cold 2% milk                                    |
| 2 pkg.        | JELL-O Chocolate Instant Pudding (3.9 oz. each) |
| 1 tub (8 oz.) | COOL WHIP Whipped Topping, thawed, divided      |

MIX chocolate and condensed milk; pour into crust.

Sprinkle with nuts.

BEAT 2% milk and pudding mixes with whisk 2 min.;

spoon 1-1/2 cups over nuts. Stir 1/2 the whipped topping

into remaining pudding; spread over pudding layer in crust.

TOP with remaining whipped topping. Refrigerate 3 hours.